

2001 Eckhart Tolle Omega Retreat Beneath World Drama There is Peace Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 1] (2:58 - 1:14:35)

Welcome to our meditation retreat. It's wonderful to see that so many of you made it here despite the events of the last few days. If there's been any doubt in anybody's mind about the urgency of change in human consciousness, it's become very, very obvious now how urgent that inner transformation has become.

If we are not to be condemned to repeat the past over and over, to repeat the past, history, the collective human past, a lot of which is a succession of events, dreadful violence that we witnessed recently, but also the past within the conditioning of the human mind, the structures, the old patterns that to some extent are still there in everyone, in some humans in a much more acute form. So we are here to go beyond that conditioning, deep seated. And to go beyond that requires alertness, attention, presence.

So I'd like to open the retreat by ringing this bell. And the sound of that bell is a call to attention. And that is our continuous task for the next few days, to be in the state of alert attention that does not deny anything that's happening, allows it to be in a state of openness.

So our task in the next few days is to allow this moment to be. And the emotions that are part of this moment also allow them to be. And that allowing creates a space around it.

If it's an emotion, through allowing it, and emotions will come up, especially at this time. And not to deny, we are not here to deny any of that, but to allow it so completely that through the act of allowing, a spaciousness arises around what is. That is the essence of spiritual realization.

That's also the origin from where comes all healing, renewal, and not so much to be aware of that spaciousness around events, anything that arises at this moment, realizing that that is the essence of who you are. You are not that which arises, you are the field in which it arises. That is the deepest core.

So I'm starting the meditation retreat already by giving you the essence of it. So you could even go home after this. If you knew that deeply with every cell of the body and immediately see it deeply, then that's it.

And then you would realize also the truth that is so beautifully expressed in this big book, Cause and Miracles. It's at the very beginning, there's a summary. It says these lines summarize the whole cause.

And they say, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the

peace of God.

To allow this moment to be requires you to be in that state of alert attention. Otherwise, that which arises at this moment as a thought, an emotion, or an external event, will draw you in completely. Your sense of self will be drawn into that.

This is to be identified with thinking, the continuous stream of thought, which means your thought stream draws in your attention so completely that you're totally trapped in the conditioned structures of thought. And that state of inattention is the state out of which what we call evil, which is deep unconsciousness, arises. So the root of that deep unconsciousness that manifests as evil in the world is the state of being asleep, spiritually speaking.

Completely trapped in conditioned mind patterns. So our task here is to be aware of that in ourselves. That which arises, whatever arises at this moment, within or without, to be able to watch that.

Be with it, be open to it. And then there's always something greater than that which happens. Whether that which happens is a happy or an unhappy event, they come and go in any case.

If you want to cling to a happy event, or a happy thought, or a happy emotion, then of course after a little while that comes to an end. Or if you feel threatened by an unhappy event, or an unhappy emotion, then you get drawn into reactivity. And the world becomes a fearful place, because there are so many things that are to be feared inside yourself and outside.

Many thousands of people died a violent death not far from here last week. The mind seeks an explanation. I don't want to give you any facile explanations.

First of all, to see that, that's what happened. Of course every physical form comes to an end, but it always seems very sad if it comes to a very premature and violent end in that way. And we become aware of how fragile the fabric of phenomenal existence is, how quickly what seems so solid and real can dissolve.

And what looks so tragic from a normal perspective, and is, it is. If you have read accounts of people who faced the imminent possibility of death and survived, or people who underwent a so-called near-death experience, there's one common factor that most of them speak about. They speak about the fear that is there up to almost the very end, and then the last few seconds, an accident seems inevitable.

Somehow they survived, so later they could talk about it. An accident seemed inevitable, and the last few seconds, many of those survivors speak of suddenly great serenity and peace came. And you have a similar account in near-death experiences, where it seems that people already went into death, and many of them described those last few

moments as a sense of deep peace, and a sense of all is well.

It seems contradictory when the survival of their physical form was threatened, but at the last moment, a shift happened. And suddenly there was a deep sense of rightness even there, which from an external perspective seems impossible. And that is, that peace that comes, and I'm sure it came to many of those who died in the last few seconds.

It came to me. I died psychologically, and the whole psychological structure of the self died through intense suffering. And again, there was the same experience of deep peace suddenly, when it all collapsed.

There is always, there is another side to it, even to what looks like an unmitigated tragedy and disaster. We can't, it's on the surface, this is not the case when you look at it from the surface. There is the redemptive factor at work.

And that is the realization that you are not this form identity as which you appear temporarily in this world. And when your form identity, your existence as this form, physical form, is threatened, truly threatened, then there's the possibility of spiritual awakening. And the strange thing is, in some cases, the spiritual awakening, or what I call the flowering of consciousness, can come to a person in the last five seconds of his or her life.

And it doesn't matter. The flowering is there. And according to the ancient Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is read by the monk to the dying person, even after the physical body has died, there's a thread that runs through the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and that is at various stages, even after that, the possibility for you to recognize your essential nature comes several times.

You miss it, and then another possibility comes. If you miss them all, then okay, then, as they say, I'm not wanting you to believe anything, but the book then says, then okay, you reincarnate again. If you miss that, then you will be forced into the cycle of reincarnation.

But please, I don't want to give you any new belief structures. And I don't want this to be a comforting belief, because we want to go deeper than that. So when your survival is threatened as a form identity, there is always the possibility of awakening out of identification with this form.

And your survival as a form identity can appear in two ways. One is your physical existence is threatened by something, imminent death of the physical. It can also be that the survival of your psychological form identity as the mind-made sense of me, the self, with my story, my history, and my unhappiness, and happiness occasionally, that is threatened or imminent, has reached a point of imminent collapse, sometimes because

the suffering is so acute that it cannot sustain itself anymore.

And there also is the possibility of sudden disidentification from form, which is mind structures and emotional structures, before consciousness was totally identified with those structures. And suddenly it removes itself, so to speak, and when you speak of it later, people use different words, and some cannot express it at all, because it defies language. What is it that happens at that point of realization?

And some people to whom it happened, all they can say, this was the case with me when I died psychologically, all I could say was, there's so much peace suddenly, both within, and it even seems as if the peace were outside, even in the traffic, it seems to be even in there. I couldn't understand it. So many say such serenity, such peacefulness, and yet aliveness, and perhaps cannot explain any further where does that come from, what is that, in the very face of death and disaster, how could that suddenly appear?

And then fortunately there's a further possibility for that awakening, otherwise you would have to wait for disaster to happen, or your physical death. And perhaps the other possibility arises through spiritual teaching, not teaching in the form of learning new things, but the power of a teaching that arises out of that state of realization. And all then, a few pointers are given, but there's a power behind those pointers, and so one could say, you are here also to die to your form identity, to your complete identification with me as this physical, psychological form, which is a very fearful state, because everybody knows, no matter how much you deny it, that it's only a matter of time before that goes.

Whether it goes when you reach the age of 95 or 100, whether it goes in a violent explosion created by a madman, or whether it goes when you least expect it, and you slip on a banana skin and break your neck, and it's gone. Death comes in many disguises, but it's always the same. So we honor for a moment those thousands of people that died, and we are not denying that on one level, yes, it is deeply sad and tragic.

And we also see that there is a deeper level to it, and not as a belief that tries to reinterpret it, and just to make it okay so that we don't suffer so much. No, just to see the impermanence of all forms, life forms, to see how fragile this fabric of phenomenal existence is, of forms, to recognize that, that recognition is the beginning of something else. It's strange, it seems, what does it mean when you see, isn't it sad that every form of life is so short-lived?

Shouldn't we be weeping every day because each one of us is condemned to death? If you could even, you could have a little date on you, each one would have a date if you knew it, and you could read it on your hand or something, you'd say, oh, that's how much time I've got left. And that is the truth.

And it is a miracle that humans are not continuously wailing and weeping, because they are condemned to death, all of us. And why are they not continuously weeping and wailing? Because underneath it there is a recognition that that is not the ultimate truth.

Otherwise nobody could even live any longer. Why do anything, why carry on with anything? It's all going to dissolve anyway, of course it is.

And even your children, I mean, they are going to die too. It's all dissolving like dust. If it doesn't dissolve violently, it dissolves through the passage of time, which goes fairly quickly too.

So if you saw this room and a speeded up version on a film, which condenses 2,000 years into one minute, and 2,000 years is very little on a planetary or cosmic level, then all, even the seemingly solid objects, you would see them crumbling to dust. They're already crumbling to dust, it's just you can't see it. And that would be an amazing eye-opener, if you could see all of phenomenal existence within one minute.

Gone. Now let's see, if the whole world were one color, let's say if everything were green, every object, every being green, the color green would not exist for you, of course, because you would have nothing to differentiate it from. Now, the whole world, everything that appears in this world is impermanent, as this is dissolving already, every form, including this form.

If there were nothing else, remember the analogy I just gave you with green, if there were nothing else, you wouldn't even know it. If there were only green, there would be no green. If there were only impermanence, there wouldn't even be the knowledge of impermanence.

The very fact that you can know it and see it and be aware of it, not as a thought, but just as an awareness, an aware presence, and there's simply the looking, there's simply the seeing of it. So if you see how a form dissolves slowly or violently, and simply your eyes remain open, so to speak, I'm using seeing both literally and metaphorically, and you're simply in that state of open, almost astonishment, and you see the forms, the flux, the continuous coming and going, birth and death of all these life forms, and you see it. The seeing of it is the beginning of the awakening, is already the awakening.

It seems insignificant to see it, because after you've seen it, the mind will come in and say something about it. That's not it. The mind might draw some conclusion and say, okay, so that means I'm not going to do anything anymore because it's pointless anyway.

So what's the point of it all? I mean, I just might as well go home and get drunk. That's the mental conclusion that leads you astray again.

So if we can remain with the seeing, the pure seeing of it, and not come to any mental

conclusions about it, and stay with the seeing of the coming and going of forms, not only as death, also of all forms that come into your life and then leave you again, come and leave you. Wow. And there you are, present.

There's a presence, suddenly, that seeing, that awareness is a... We need to be very careful here. At this point, it would be best for me to walk out of the room, stop speaking.

But that would throw the Omega Institute into disarray, and they would have to give you your money back. When I give it more labels now, there's always the danger that you get lost in mental labels, and you don't realize that every word I say is simply a pointer, just a different pointer, a slightly different perspective. And what comes together here is what I, at the very beginning today, I said, allowing this moment to be, that is the openness to what is, what arises.

And then goes away again. Comes, is born into this moment. It's born, and then it leaves.

To allow it to be, and that is the same, it's just now a different perspective on it, is to see how all the forms that appear in your life as the form that this moment takes, this moment ever, to see that and allow it to be. Allow the impermanent nature of the arising forms to be, and see it. You don't even need to call, mentally label it, not even say, yes, it's all impermanent.

So it's a state of open awareness in which that is recognized. That is enormously liberating, to see it, to recognize it without drawing any conclusions. And that is what is arising already from within you, is that which is beyond birth and death and the arising of forms.

The awareness itself that sees. And it is that which people who face imminent death, perhaps in the last few seconds of their lives, realize. That is the disidentification from form, from having your sense of self completely identified with a particular form, and then spend the rest of your life in a reactive relationship to whatever happens in this moment, the little me reacting.

Every form either will enhance your sense of form identity, I need this, I need you, I'm not going to let this go, I'm not going to let you go, or other forms threaten your sense of form identity, go away, I don't want this, I don't want this moment, what's happening, I don't like what's happening, push away what's happening at this moment. That's a very common thing. It's threatening, forms are threatening.

So when you are only here as a little form identity, you are in a continuous reactive relationship to what happens around you, personalized and reactive. And you're always looking out for the next threat to your form existence, often psychological threat,

defensive, hold back, what does he want? What does he want from me?

Or you're looking out for something to enhance this always deficient sense of self. How can I feel more secure? I need to add something to who I am, and maybe I can add you.

Maybe if you all think that I'm great, then I can add that, that would be great. So the need to add more to who I think I am to strengthen my form identity is there in the absence of the recognition of that which is beyond form as who you truly are. So when you don't know that you are condemned to reenact those egoic patterns, egoic means simply identified with form, as me, physical and psychological image of me, my story, which is not complete enough, therefore I need to add more.

And the little me might even look for enlightenment because it thinks it is an experience or it is a firework that I can add to the store of my experiences as the supreme experience, because I've already got the big car and the big house, I've got that in my sack of experiences already, but it's not enough. I thought it would be, but it isn't. So I'm now looking for the greatest experience to add and then I'll be okay, of course, when I'm enlightened, I'll be okay.

So I'm looking for an event in time to happen and that's going to be it. And surely it will be some big fireworks going off inside, probably, when I'm enlightened. And of course it's possible that fireworks may go off inside you, it might be a beautiful spiritual experience, and then it comes to an end.

And then you say, oh, now I need another one. So we are not here, well, maybe one or two of you came for that reason, but we are not here to have a spiritual experience. That would be frustrating, because even if you do have one, and many of you won't, even if you do have one, you'd have to go home again.

Somebody wrote this book recently, I haven't read it, but it has a nice title, which is, the book is called, *After the Ecstasy, The Laundry*. So there is the, when you're identified with the mind, the mind is looking for more. The me, the mind-made me, is looking for more, it's looking to strengthen itself, it's looking to, really, you want to know more deeply who you are, you want to know, truly know yourself, you want to strengthen your sense of self, of who I am, to finally arrive at that sense of really being yourself fully.

And if necessary, if you are totally identified with those structures, in the complete absence of even the slightest awareness, completely trapped in firm identity, completely and totally trapped in it, then killing 10,000 people to strengthen your identity means nothing. You don't even know them as human beings anymore, because all you can see is the mental concepts in your head. You live in a conceptualized mind-made universe, so you deaden the moment, and you can see it in a slight manifestation, the moment you label somebody as this or that, already you have removed their aliveness from your awareness and deadened them a little bit.

And then if you put another label on them, and another one, then you're no longer aware of who this being is, because you're completely unaware of who you are, you're completely trapped in a conceptual mind, and so killing a human being means nothing, because you're not even aware what you're doing at all. There's the essence of human madness. And now, nobody in this room is at that level of unconsciousness where you're so trapped in your form identity that you would do anything to strengthen it and to be right, but those mind structures do operate in a much, in a more, not quite such a violent and total way, but in everyone, if you are alert, you can see your own mind structures that impose labels on other humans, on nature, on anything.

And then relate, not to that human being, but you've had, you suddenly have a screen between yourself and that human being, which is your mental label, and you're relating to that mental label. So that can arise not as completely in any of you as it still does in those humans who are totally, completely trapped in that. And of course, there are areas on the planet where those, this human unconsciousness expresses itself in a particularly acute form.

There are areas where there's continuous conflict, continuous, like totally forced to reenact those very unconscious mind patterns again and again. And those people who live there, they live as in a nightmare. I read in the newspaper, one Israeli woman said to an American a few days ago, a woman who lives in Israel, said to an American visitor, welcome to my nightmare.

And now, whenever you encounter a deeply unconscious human being who imposes these labels on you, and it's not only those mind structures, because those humans who are deeply unconscious are also completely unaware of the enormous amount of pain they carry within, and the pain, the collective human pain body that they carry within, emotional pain accumulated during thousands of years of human madness. And that is in you, but you don't even know it.

All it does, it amplifies your already insane mind structures. It means it gives them added emotional energy, and you don't even know that that's what's happening. And whenever you encounter a human like that, there's the danger that he or she may pull you also into unconsciousness, also into form identification.

So the encounter with a highly unconscious human being is always, there's the question, when you encounter such a human being, are you going to be pulled into the same level of unconsciousness? And that danger is always there. And on a personal level, that happens when you encounter another human being with a strong pain body, and it's being acted out, and you're maybe attacking you, if not physically, verbally, accusing, you did this, that, you.

And what the pain body wants, it wants you to have pain, and give me more pain too. It wants, please, pain, pain. And so unless you are very alert there, you will get drawn into

that also.

Reactivity will come in. That happens in relationships a lot, mutual feeding of the pain body. And collectively, the challenge that collectively is being faced in America now is whether they collectively will be pulled to the same level as of unconsciousness.

In which case, they would perpetrate the same deeds, and would be saying, yes, we are justified in killing innocent people, they did it, we'll do it. So that is the challenge collectively, is not to be drawn, I'm not saying take no actions, action will happen, not to be drawn into that deep unconsciousness, which is total identification with form. Now this could be a belief, an emotion, it could be the collective form of our race, our nation, our tribe, our religion, complete identification, and you're encapsulated in a form identity, but it's mind stuff, completely mind created, encapsulated in a form identity that needs its enemies even to survive.

It would lose its identity without its enemies, so it needs to continuously create enemies. That's the human madness, it's been going on for thousands of years. Totally encapsulated in form identity.

People do it on a personal level also, and in certain cultures, it tends to be more a collective form identity, which is even more mad than a totally personalized form identity, which is mad enough. And the greatest evils have come, were inflicted on humans by other humans, not by people who were trapped in a personalized form, those are the so-called criminals. But the evil they do is nothing compared to what nations and tribes and religions do to other humans.

It's a drop compared to a huge ocean. Criminals are nothing, they just have a match, the same madness, but it's a personalized, but when you get the collective form identity, then you really see the madness of it. And what is form identity other than complete identification with mind?

Really, the whole identity is mind structures. So the challenge that America is being faced with is to stay, not to be drawn completely into that as a reaction. And ours being together here this week is more significant as far as the collective consciousness is concerned, is more significant than it appears on the surface.

A field, a group of human beings going beyond that, still relatively rare, but arising more and more on the planet, although at the moment all you see is the unconsciousness which has resurfaced. And you find that in yourself too, on a personal level, the resurfacing of old mind structures can happen also in yourself. It may even happen during these days, occasionally your pain body may come up.

Now the expression of that won't be as violent as the madness we are witnessing now, but the root of it is the same identification with form, with complete absence of spacious

awareness. And then of course a complete inability to see any other mental position than the one that you identified with, which is your form identity. A total inability to see any other perspective than this one, that is because this is me, or us, which is a big me.

But that is the same in a milder form. It arises in you perhaps tonight when you're talking to somebody and you're having a discussion, and a certain emotional violence flows into defending your standpoint, because you know you're right, and there comes the emotion with it. And if you sense within yourself the enormous momentum behind mind structures energized by emotion, and when you speak, if you can observe, perhaps, and it seems not related, how is that related to the destruction of what happened a few days ago?

And the strange thing is, it is related. To see it seems so harmless to defend your point of view, but at the root, this is the root of the same unconsciousness. I'm not saying no longer have any point of view.

No. You have a point of view, and say, this is my point of view. But the strange thing is, whatever you express through the mind, any thought you have concerning something, is one perspective on it, any situation.

One perspective, okay, you could shift and move to another perspective. It could be true too, but not a single one is totally true. About almost any country in the world, one could probably put a credible case that this country is the worst country on earth.

And then you could put a credible case that this country is the best country on earth. Perspectives. Viewpoints.

Mental positions. The truth is far greater. You can never encapsulate it in one mental position.

Again, express a mental position, but not be a mental position. When you are a mental position, what you can still do is that you know that this is what's happening. Here we go again.

So let's see if what... And America, it happens to be where the greatest concentration of energy is on the planet. So what happens here is decisive for the future of the planet.

And is it going to go more unconscious? Or which way is it going to go in the face of this challenge? America is a country of extremes.

There are, even before this happens, there are extremes of violence, extremes of this, extremes of bigness, extremes of also spiritual things arising. Extremes of good and bad. Enormous.

Because there's so much energy here, you can see the extremes of good and bad more

clearly. And so this is why it's so important what happens here now for humanity. We were driving yesterday.

The only way I could get here was to fly to Toronto and then drive down here. And we were in the car, maybe halfway down, and we were overtaking this car, and on the rear window, the driver had written in big white letters two lines. The bottom line read, God bless America, which is fine.

And the top line said, Kill them all! And we were overtaking this car with a Canadian license plate. I was hoping that them all did not include Canadians.

So it's in a strange way, it's all related. Us being here, what we are engaged in these days here, in a strange way, is related to something that seems like on a different planet. It's only a hundred miles from here it happened.

But it seems, if you look at the surroundings here, and the people here, relatively very conscious compared to still a large part of the population of the planet. So it seems we are two different worlds. Us here and the events that happened there.

This is almost like a heavenly realm. And there it seems hell on earth happened. And yet, they are not separate, they are related.

And the inner work, for lack of a better word, that we are doing here is very closely related to what happened there. And this is what I've just been addressing here to see how it is related. How your inner structures, those things are only more acute manifestations of that which each human being carries within.

And it is now or never, really, if humanity does not go beyond those old mind structures, it will relive the old, its history, and we know what that is like. Look at the 20th century. Oh, my God.

Compelled to relive history. And of course the planet couldn't endure that. Another hundred years of that, another century like this, 20th century, without the mind structures of humans changing, but with increasing, increased technology.

What technology and science does, although it is a, it requires intelligence, of course, to produce science and technology, and they're not bad in themselves, but what it tends to do is magnify the effects of human unconsciousness. It magnifies it. Before, it was the same unconsciousness, but they couldn't do that much harm because they didn't have the means.

They could have, but they didn't. So, if humans, if that change doesn't happen, it could be the end of humanity as a species. Pity.

It was a good try. Consciousness will move through any, consciousness wants to move

through now and flower through this species, so these are critical times. It could go one way or the other.

The fact that we are here is a good sign, and change is happening. Of course, there is the reaction. Reactions are happening to the collective events, but there's also a deepening.

I saw somebody said on TV that a writer, an American writer, I've forgotten the name. America tended to be, she said, type A personalities. I'm not quite sure what that means, but I assume it means extrovert, doing, going out, getting things done, doing type A, and she perceived a shift from that, a deepening, a going within, which is, there's also the reactivity happening in others, so we'll have to see which way it is going.

The country could be swept by reactivity and unconsciousness, or there could be a deepening, and then if action is necessary, it would come out of that state of consciousness. It would be different from reactive action. So, how to be here, in these days that we are here, the essence is to remain awake to what arises in you, and allow it to be.

Observe thought structures, emotional fluctuations in yourself. Let them be. Let them be.

That's the spaciousness around them. Observe your mind, either the mind when it's talking to yourself, to itself, the inner monologue or dialogue. Observe your mind also in interaction with other people, the energy behind it.

And one could say a little tip for you for the next few days, and this is a good tip even to take beyond this retreat, is not to take your mind too seriously. That in itself is very liberating, because the very reason why we are here is to realize that we are much more than that, than the conditioned mental entity. So don't take it too seriously implies that there is an observing presence that knows that this is the mind.

And so it's automatically almost your mind isn't that serious anymore. So it implies when I say don't take your mind too seriously, it implies a continuous observing presence that may arise even in the middle of a heated conversation. By the way, we may have periods of silence too here, but not continuously.

Today perhaps you will be engaged in conversations with people and so on, and you may have positions to defend, to put forward, you may have things to complain about, not good enough, that shouldn't, they shouldn't have, why did they, or the speaker, why doesn't he, he should, why aren't we meditating? This should, that should, they should, why doesn't he, don't they, and you will see that when you are identified with mind, how much complaining it actually does. If not outwardly to others, some people are very good at that too, inward complaining, it's a very deep-seated, because complaining is a strong, why is that?

And how is that related to the events in New York? When you complain, you are right. Somebody else or a situation around you is wrong.

By being right and making someone or a situation around you wrong, you have strengthened your form identity, the me, and that to the me feels good. In reality, it feels bad. If you truly knew how it feels, you would know that it feels bad and your body knows that it feels bad, because it doesn't like that energy field, it actually gets sick if you are in that for years and years, because there is a continuous contraction.

Energy cannot flow anymore, because you are always, whenever you complain, there is a little contraction and the egoic form identity loves that, because when I complain, I can be right, somebody else can be wrong, then I am more fully myself. That feels good. So to watch that pattern of making wrong in yourself, continuously, also to the essence of what complaining is, I am not saying that if you put up with whatever people do to you, this is not the kind of complaining when you say, stop treading on my toes, that's not complaining, I am not talking about that, or take your hand out of my bag when somebody is about to take your money, that's not complaining, that's not what I am talking about, or in a restaurant you say, take back this soup, it's cold, I am not having it, that's not complaining either, but it could become complaining in a restaurant when you then say, how dare you put this, you give me this cold soup, what are you doing to me? And for the next two hours after you walk out of the restaurant, so to watch and to catch the complainer in your head, which is a very deep seated mind structure, and it seems innocent enough, a little bit of complaining can't do anybody any harm, and yet it's not that harmless at all, so that's a good thing to watch in yourself, and complaining of course is resistance to what is, and the egoic little me, the form identity loves that too, it doesn't like what is, it would rather complain about what is, and even in the midst of beautiful surroundings, it will look for the one thing that it can complain about, so you are here also watching your mind, and not condemning yourself when suddenly you realise that for example you have been complaining for the past ten minutes or two hours in your head, things may come, you are here for a few days, so many mental streams may arise in you, there may be one mental stream that says, well, I haven't had a spiritual experience, this obviously isn't working for me, I mean, I might as well go now, what's the point, I mean, all the things I should have, all the things I shouldn't have come here, I mean, I have so much to do at home to deal with.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:48)

So,

[Speaker 1] (1:15:16 - 1:26:56)

not to take your mind too seriously, and that is even an insult if there is anybody in this room completely identified still with their mind, that this statement is insulting, because that statement implies don't take yourself too seriously, what do you mean, I am serious,

and it is liberating not to take your mind too seriously, and there is nothing personal in it, it's the human mind, there's no, it's not really you, it's not repersonalising it, it's the human mind, and emotions come, perhaps pain body may come, accumulated pain from the past, it's human pain, there it is, so it's not only that you don't take it seriously, you don't take it personally, especially that personally applies to the pain that arises in you, and it may arise perhaps in connection with the events that took place the last few days, which are dreadful, pain may arise, now I am not saying don't take that too seriously, let's leave that for the mind, but I am saying don't take it personally, this has been going on for thousands and thousands of years, the same violence, the same pain, allow it to be, human pain, allow it to be so completely that you feel almost gentle about it, in other words, gentleness around it, with allowing comes a gentleness into your life, non-allowing, and allowing always concerns the present moment, non-allowing is a harshness and reactivity, so the gentleness comes in through allowing, even if the emotion is harsh or very painful, so there is a space around it, a space around it, and when you don't take your mind too seriously, there is also a space around your mind activity, so this is why we are here, and it is such a, what could be greater than to step out of all that conditioning to a new level of consciousness, not new in the sense that it hasn't been there before, the ancient teachers pointed to it, one could say it's always there, it's always there, that spaciousness, but it's not there for you if you don't know it, you cannot do away with it and you cannot create it, it is the essence, it's consciousness itself, the vastness of the unconditioned consciousness, it's all pervasive, it is grace when you know it, it appears in your life as grace, when you don't know it, all the shutters in the house are closed, you sit in darkness and the house is flooded by sunlight, that would be the same, grace is there but you don't know it, so in that sense it's not there for you, very helpful thing throughout this time that you are here and beyond is to feel the aliveness in your body, what I call the inner body, to have some connectedness with the inner energy field of your body, to feel a very subtle, in a very subtle sense, there is an aliveness there in every cell of the body and that when I speak about this, it sounds as if I were encouraging you to identify with your physical body but that's not the case, it's sensing that which pervades the body but in itself is not the body, the very life, the very consciousness that appears temporarily as the body senses it as yourself and then suddenly you feel alive, every cell is alive and you can still pay attention to your surroundings, that takes your away attention from thinking, relatively little thinking is needed here and even in your reality in your life, the thinking that you need to do your work, that's fine, but most other thinking is very repetitive, it's the old mind structures.

I'm not telling you to stop thinking because that would create a further problem but we are going in that way and realize there is great intelligence beyond thought, that vast intelligence that you are. So here we are to allow that intelligence to arise, that is greater than the mind but not separate from the human mind and once you know that vast intelligence, the human mind functions beautifully when it's needed within that far

greater whole, the human mind is fine then. You're not trapped in it as a form of entity in it, as a psychological form of me.

So dwelling in, inhabiting your body as you sit, speak to people, easy to get drawn into mind when you start talking, easy to identify with mental positions the moment you verbally interact with people, less likely to happen when you inhabit as you listen to the other person. Oh, in a state of open presence, listen to that viewpoint and give it space, spaciousness arises. As you sit here and listen to my voice, be there totally with every cell of the body, be here completely, dwell, rest in your energy field and then you're simply here as an alive, alert presence.

And it can be that alive and alert presence, without the baggage of past, it's not completely gone, it's still there, it may reassert itself from time to time. But to realize that you can be here as an alert presence, without the baggage of past, which means without the interference of conceptualization and labeling. And you haven't become stupid in that.

You're actually very intelligent in that state. That alertness itself, one could say, is pure intelligence, pure awareness. Thought can come out of it.

Anything can come out of that. Everything creative comes out of that. That is going beyond the conditioning that's been running most humans for so long.

So we are here to go beyond that conditioning of the mind. Beautiful, beautiful. And it's, we don't have to make it happen, it is already arising.

We will have a moment now of meditation, and we will begin on meditating. We honor the people who died those few days ago. And emotions that arise, we allow them to be.

There may be sadness. There's no need to convince yourself mentally that all is well.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:57 - 1:26:57)

No.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:58 - 2:33:54)

Whatever emotion is there, you allow it. But you allow it completely. Sadness, or anger, or a mixture, allowing it.

May they know who they truly are beyond form. May I know who I truly am beyond form. See the fact of impermanence of all forms dissolving.

Allow that also to be. There's an ancient statement which most of you know and that concerns all forms that arise. This too will pass.

And if you allow the emotions that are there, or any thoughts that are there, be aware that that allowing is a spaciousness, a stillness. And many of those who died may have seen that in the last few seconds. And that is the flowering of consciousness.

They may not have been ready on the surface. Ten minutes before, they may have been watching a computer screen. And yet suddenly it came.

And here the same death really is coming to you more gently. You can only be aware of the sacredness of life when you go beyond the forms of life. That is why death and sacredness are so strongly connected.

And the modern world knows nothing about that. Whenever a form dissolves, death, that's called death, something shines through that is not the form but it's the essence of the form. Traditionally it was impossible to awaken spiritually because death happened to you.

Psychological or close to physical death. Psychological death means you lose all the things that gave you your sense of self. Gone, gone, gone, gone.

Content was removed, the accumulated content was removed from your mind. Nothing could explain. The world doesn't make sense anymore.

Even that's gone. And you thought what this world was all about. Loss, death, loss, loss, loss.

Dreadful on the surface. And yet some of those people suddenly woke up, awakening and realized they are not the content of their minds. They are not their form, their mental form.

And it's usually simply realized as deep peace that cannot be threatened by anything. If it could speak, but usually that peace can't even say anything, it's just peace. If it could speak, it would say there is no death.

Life has no opposite. Birth has an opposite. Life has no opposite.

But usually the peace doesn't speak. And that is the deepest meaning of those lines that I quoted earlier from the summary of the Course in Miracles. Nothing real can be threatened.

Real is used in its deepest sense. The body is relatively real, but real in a deeper sense is only that which is not subject to birth and death and that's the essence of your being. And you cannot grasp that.

It fills this room. It fills your very being. But when the mind comes in and says, well, I'm still looking, because all the mind could do is look for further content, it is not in the realm of content.

Our whole being together here is nothing to do with adding content to your mind, so there's nothing here for the mind to grasp. It is subtle. So after our retreat, hopefully nobody is going to ask you, what did you get out of it?

However, if they do ask you, the correct answer is nothing. Imagine the mind starting off when they, what did you get out of it? Well, let me think.

Well, on the one hand, on the other hand, thank you, thank you. Oh yes, one other thing I forgot to mention. We're here for most of the week.

Plenty of time to go into the now. So much time, in fact, that we don't need to wait for anything while we're here. So that's the other practice while you're here, to let go of waiting, which is a mindset.

Most people are completely trapped in it, and again, it's part of the conditioned, part of the collective human conditioning to be always waiting for the next thing. So normal that most people don't know it. When you observe it in people, how they act and react and interact, they can see in people's faces often that they're not here internally.

There's an absence because they project themselves continuously forward into an imaginary future that they need to get to as soon as possible. Or an imaginary future that they need to fear might arrive. It's either one or the other.

And so there comes that expression in their faces and an entire energy emanation that is telling you, I'm not here. I'd rather be somewhere else. You know the stickers that some people have in the back of their cars that say, I'd rather be fishing or something like that.

But that's the mindset. I'd rather be somewhere else. And it's almost they are looking for something continuously.

When you're completely trapped in mind, that is the energy that comes and there's a tension that comes with that. One thing is certain. They are not at ease in the now.

And you can live your whole life like that. And that's only the face. The body would rather be in the now And so that's a collective pattern, not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem.

So one can observe that in oneself. This psychological need for the next moment and an unease with this moment. Desire for the next moment because it's got to be more fulfilling than this one.

And that's the mindset. But it never arrives because the next moment can only arrive as this moment. Again, it's always this moment.

So it's got to be more than this isn't it, this can't be it. So there's the fear of the next moment. So the fluctuation between the fear of the next moment and yet even in the

fear of the next moment, you're projecting yourself to the next moment, whether it's a minute from now or next week or next year, what might happen to you or someone close to you or the world.

There's a projection into a possible future situation that you don't want but surely it'll happen. Those dreadful things will happen to me and they're being played out, those possibilities in the mind continuously generating fear of future. And yet within that there is some strange compulsion that you want more of it, like an addiction.

Although it's a very unpleasant state to be in, it becomes a self-serving, it wants to, the state itself wants to perpetuate itself, that state of fearful anxiety, of fearful projection. And then if somebody says, stop, you don't need, no, this is important, I need to worry about this. Fear of future but wanting, still compulsively projecting oneself away into a fearful future.

And then the desire for, well, some improvement, something that I can add to the content of who I am and of course I need future for that, I need to become more of this or that. The two movements, fear and desire, both intimately connected with a mindset that lives in and through and is perpetuated by this future. So one can observe that in oneself.

The moment you observe it in yourself, you're already somewhat free of it. Oh, the mental projection, the restlessness, the unease with what is. And that is a peculiar state, normal, very normal.

It's an, since life, the whole of life is what is at this moment, the whole of life is inseparable from the suchness in your experience except the suchness of this moment. It's always what is now. And the mindset, if that is a denial or a rejection or a resistance to what is now, then that is your relationship with life is one of rejection, denial, resistance, non-openness to that beautiful thing which is not a thing that is life.

The vastness that is there, that intelligence that is there, far greater than the human mind it's there even in your very cells, it's within, it's without and yet you don't know it when you're trapped in these collective mindsets. There's a contraction. So to recognize it in oneself is a great thing.

There it is. And it's often with the recognition of this mindset operating of needing future and feeling it even in the body, that contraction, the unease which of course leads to disease if you do it for a few years. With the awareness of it comes already freedom from it.

You're not completely trapped in the pattern. You see it. Again, there's the seeing of it.

And you don't take the next step after the seeing. You don't draw some kind of conclusion. You remember we talked about seeing the impermanent nature of all forms, seeing how short-lived, how fleeting the phenomenal existence is of every life form and

not to jump to some conclusion, to stay with the seeing of it and here also to see patterns in oneself and stay with the seeing, not draw a conclusion that says, you see, you're not enlightened.

You're not going to make it. After 15 years of meditation you're still doing it, you see. What's the point?

You might as well give up, says the monologue in the head. You see, you're no good. You're doing it again.

You've done the workshop, whatever it is called, the retreat, and you're doing it again. It's pointless. You can't do it.

And then one conclusion after another. Or at a very early stage when you see it, and immediately you start writing a book about it. And so staying with just simply the seeing of those patterns.

With the seeing comes, yes, there comes the possibility of stepping out now. It often happens without any volition on your part. The seeing is already a stepping out, one could say, of those mind patterns.

And so if the one thing you get here, you catch here, it's more like you spend a few days here, but there's only one thing that I endeavor to transmit to you to avoid the word teaching. There's only one thing. There's not many things.

One thing that, and it's more like it's not so much that you understand that one thing mentally, it's like catching it. Oh. And if you only catch this one thing which is stepping out of being trapped in mind patterns, which are always associated with time, we talked about future, of course also past, stepping into the now, your attention, your awareness from being completely identified with mind forms, thoughts, and emotional forms your attention separates itself from identification with forms, mind forms, thought forms, and you perceive that as suddenly stepping out of time and out of mind, the two go together, into the now, that field of now that before didn't even exist for you. It's possible for you to step out of time and mind into now, and that is an awakening. You awaken out of identification with that into oh, this moment.

An alertness arises that can be compared to suddenly waking up from a dream, and you know when you wake up suddenly your eyes open and you go, oh, that was all a dream. Oh. And there's a similar qualitative difference between that state of consciousness of alert presence.

This is the thing alert presence and the state of dream-like state of being completely identified with mind patterns. And this is the reason why in the East, in India, ancient teachers speak of illusion and the unreality of the world and why they use the word awakening. It's been used for thousands of years.

Buddha means the one who is awake. Jesus speaks of staying awake. Staying awake, don't go to sleep.

He was pointing to a state of consciousness. And so the qualitative awakening out of that is like coming out of sleep. So in that sense it's true to say that whoever is completely identified with their mind lives in a kind of dream world.

That you have really and it's the conditioning, it's a dream that you're kind of born into. Remember the woman I mentioned this morning said, welcome to my nightmare. It becomes a collective dream to some extent.

Each person has their personal dream, their personal conditioning and that is part of the collective conditioning. So here it's seeing that you can step out of that. You can only do that when, so to speak, the state of presence is already arising in you.

That's why I can say to you it is possible for you to step out of that state of being immersed totally in time and mind into the vastness and the beauty and the sacredness of now. And if you can't stay for more than a few seconds it doesn't matter, but you stepped out. So I put it in those terms.

I say you are able to step out and you realize you can step out of that into now. And that may happen many times during the day. You step out of that and suddenly you realize, oh, I've lost the now.

Where is it? Here. The breath can take you into the body and you sense an aliveness which takes your attention away from mental noise.

And the alertness suddenly is there. And with that is also the alertness to sense perceptions. That before, when you were immersed in this you were almost completely unaware of.

Most people move through the world being only peripherally aware of whatever surrounds them. The beauty that is everywhere. But it's obscured by mind and mental noise.

And when you step out, oh, some of you are already experiencing those moments and you notice in that state of alert presence there's a knowing that is non-conceptual. You can sit here, feel your entire energy field, and alertness is there without a compulsion to interpret or label this moment. If you need labels, you have them.

Sometimes they are needed. Somebody may ask you what's your name or it's a label or your phone number and then you'll know it or anything else if you needed one. But the liberation that comes from not compulsively interpreting continuously which is labeling, which is judging, which is only done according to whatever the conditioning of your mind is.

That's the way in which you interpret, label and judge. And so you don't see what is, you're not at ease with what is, you're judging what is and that's the mind. And with that there is no...

All those things that make life worth living are not there when you are trapped in the labeling, judging, interpreting mind. Compassion, love, a deep aliveness, a peaceful aliveness, vibrant real life peace, to feel that you are alive, to feel the goodness of life every moment beyond what is happening at this moment, a deeper goodness, not the goodness that is a moment of happiness which comes and goes, but a deeper goodness that is the goodness that some people find the moment they die, the last few seconds before the accident happens and kills them and to the last few there's suddenly and peace and a deep knowing that despite those appearances which are telling you this is dreadful, despite the appearances on a deeper level, all is well. And that realization, you don't have to wait for some disaster to approach you and that's the beauty of true spiritual teaching and the power of spiritual teaching, it tells you you don't need to wait for death.

Death is a possibility of realization, approaching death, imminent death, death itself, but you don't need to wait for physical death because you might not catch it even then. Not everybody does. Death is really not only that you do not need a disaster unless you truly need it, you do not need more intense suffering before you can get there.

It's also some humans through intense mental emotional suffering to a point where it becomes unbearable and then suddenly something within them collapses that is comparable to physical death, but it's a psychological death. It's a collapse of the psychological structure of me that has created so much suffering for myself that it can't sustain itself anymore and so to speak auto-destructs. That's another way.

So life has all provided all these ways it gives you death and it gives you suffering, beautiful, it's provided for a realization of who you are beyond form and the most gentle of all it gives you spiritual teaching, true spiritual teaching, but that only applies to those who are ready to hear and not everybody is yet ready to hear. Those who are not ready to hear they need to be faced with death or intense suffering for realization and they get it. And then there are some who are ready to hear.

What are they ready to hear? They're ready to hear that you do not need a disaster to know who you are. You do not need more intense suffering in your life mental or emotional before you can know.

And ultimately it's saying you do not need more time before you can be free of that. That is the essence of spiritual teaching is telling you you do not need more time and everything in the conditioned human mind collectively conditioned human mind is telling you no, I need more time to find myself to be myself to arrive to make it to complete myself to complete the story of me that is going through my head every day. It's not

complete so I need time.

So everything in the conditioned mind tells you I need time that is the psychological need for future more time. It says I need time because I'm not enough I need more of this I need more of that to complete myself. And that is true on the level of activities yes, everything requires time any exploration of new areas or new fields acquiring new knowledge learning new skills those things, yes, require time but we are not talking about those things we are talking about knowing yourself being yourself knowing the essence of who you are and for that then here comes the spiritual teaching which says you do not need more time to become free of the conditioned mind of thousands of years of conditioning it does not take a few more thousand years to dissolve thousands of years of conditioning to become free of time you do not need more time there is so much time accumulated inside me I think I need another five thousand years to dissolve that and not only does the spiritual teaching tell you that you don't need more time it also tells you that time is the one thing really ultimately the illusion of time on the deepest level the one thing that prevents you from realizing the fullness that is already here now the fullness of life that is in you already the completeness the fullness that already is the essence of who you are you don't there is nothing to do with time so it doesn't really matter in what way this realization arises in you ultimately one could say spiritual teachings and spiritual teachings are redundant because through suffering and facing death everybody will get it eventually through creating misery for yourself and others on the planet which looks like the workings of illusion and unconsciousness and they are and yet through creating hell on earth they'll wake up when the hell is unbearable that they have created for themselves and others so but by the grace of God the one life prior to form spiritual teachings are there for those who are ready to hear them and so you don't need more time and you have suffered enough suffering has been wonderful yes nobody would be here if they hadn't had their share of it I certainly wouldn't be here I don't know where I would be so it's worked it has worked it's taken you to this point where you are able to hear that message and recognize the truth and yet and the truth is emerging in you quite powerfully otherwise you wouldn't have made it here but there is another movement inside everyone and that is the momentum of the conditioned mind that is still there maybe for a little while now it's in the background there is something very powerful that has enabled you to be here and that enables you to remain here without running away because it is threatening to another part of you the collectively conditioned part of you it is threatening to be here and it is not pleasant to hear about your own death what you perceive to be my death it is ultimately the death of an illusion the end of identification with me my story my this, my that my problems, my this, my but occasionally in the next few days you may detect in yourself the momentum of the old coming back what am I doing here what's this all emotional pain that moves into your mind the pain body becomes active and makes you think painful thoughts or self-destructive thoughts or thoughts that condemn others around you look at them they are not spiritual I am more spiritual look they are just gossiping that's not

spiritual or they say oh these people they are so spiritual they are here they know so much more than I and then comes you don't want to be here where can I run to and if I can't run physically I run away in my mind to a problematic future that I will have to face next week and a succession of things that are waiting for me next week that I have to deal with and then you play out in your mind how you are going to deal with them it's not the reality of now it's a tree because in reality life is not complex it's a mental creation the complexity of my life and all those things reality is simple because reality is this moment and whatever you are being faced with at this moment and what you are being faced with it may indeed be challenging but whenever you face this moment completely the power to deal with whatever this moment presents will also be there when you don't face it completely because you are somewhere else then the power becomes reduced to little or almost nothing and that's the beauty of it by facing what is in a state of openness embracing this moment that means the power is there available and right action arises out of that facing this moment as it is and so you can only do one thing at a time and you do it if you have 50 things that you need to deal with you look one thing will emerge and you deal with that this is essential so essential that even one Zen master once defined Zen when he was asked can you explain the essence of Zen he said doing one thing at a time that's Zen now that doesn't give the mind much room for building up things a philosophy doing one thing at a time but doing it completely being completely here with that that completeness is part of living always being completely here not half or 80% or 90% somewhere else not really wanting to be here but it's that yes that uncompromising yes to what is this moment the only thing there ever is and that gives your life a completeness and with that completeness comes great power great also yes compassion and love arise with that completeness so wherever you are you can be there completely and if it's an unpleasant place this happens to be the now you might as well be in it completely because it is it is and the truth is it's not a place that you dislike because you have given up your inner resistance no the miracle is that when you face it completely without inner contraction which is the resistance which is the no the no which is not just a mental no in the head which judges and condemns what is and projects itself forward into some better situation the no that you carry in the emotional energy field and even physical that no to what is is the physical state of contraction in your inner energy field no and most people live in that way so there's the mental no and there's the emotional no and there's even the physical no as the physical contraction and then you can experiment and say okay there's enough presence in you that you are now able to experiment and say okay I've lived with the no for 45 years 50 years I'll try something else now I'll try a yes to what is what have I got to lose and then for a day or a whole week maybe on a retreat what it feels like and how I experience life when I say yes internally to this moment and often you will not succeed because the no is deep seated the state of contraction and the mental conditioning but there's enough presence in you now to see it so you recognize the no and the contraction and by recognizing it and seeing it you're no longer trapped in it freedom is already there you're now able to step out the seeing is the stepping out oh wow, there it is again as one spiritual writer

puts it you will often observe in yourself that state of no returning and he calls it you live in contraction city so while you're here you do not need to demand of yourself perfection you do not need to demand that you now at least while you're on this retreat at least while I'm here I should be managing to live completely in the now without resistance and if I'm not managing now I'm obviously no good and there's no point in carrying on no, that's not required you don't need to you don't even need to live in the state of yes for the rest of the week that's a big task how am I going to manage to live in the now for the rest of this week the beauty of it is that's not necessary all that's needed is this moment and it's here all that's needed is the openness to this just this moment not the next one there is no next moment just this to know whatever happens to be with it and if what happens is a state of contraction to know that oh, there it is the inner know there it is all right let the contraction be there and then you feel it and see what happens when you whatever arises even if it seems like an undesirable mental or emotional state that is not compatible with enlightenment even that arises and you are okay with that too that's okay that this now is okay no matter what form it takes the now is welcomed so that is perfection not to acquire an imagined state of perfection the master I need to become a master a spiritual master how am I going to get there the only difference between you and the master unless you may already be a master and just be enjoying yourself listening to all this the only difference between you and the master is that the master is completely aligned with what is not against it a state of completeness and openness to this moment whatever form it takes and the master is simply aligned with the suchness of now not opposing it thereby the master is aligned with life itself the vastness and power of life itself beyond forms in which life appears and that can move through him or her so that's the only difference it's not some imaginary ideal of perfection that you need to reach that's another big problem as if you didn't have enough already it is simply to be with what is in the state of yes at this moment the alignment with that that's the master so it's not really to do with improving what is that comes sometimes as a side effect of the state of acceptance not even improving yourself you're not really here to improve yourself that's heavy stuff and some of you may have been working at it for years and if you have then you realize that well, is that ever going to come to an end and on that level you could go on forever of improving yourself but realizing a vaster dimension in which this little being exists with all its imperfections it doesn't matter and there's within that vastness of now there exists a little story of me a few accumulated experiences some knowledge sufferings and then they are tied together in a bundle and it's called you write a name on it that you didn't even choose yourself somebody else wrote it on it and that's me and some bundles look nicer than others some bundles of me were given pitiful things dreadful things and they were put together and tied together and so that was your raw material and then other bundles were full of nice things but even those no that's not enough that's not really all those nice things in my bundle and yet the fear is still there the unease and no matter how you improve the bundle of me what you add to it not going to make that much difference and I'm not telling you not to improve yourself you have to learn new things and so on but you can't find yourself

there or improving physically doing exercises that's wonderful great but again this is easier fortunately what this is about is easier than improving yourself which you can carry on with that anyway I'm not saying give it up that's not what's there a completion and if life gave you a bundle of awful things and put a name on that probably you didn't even like and you didn't like what was in it you never liked yourself East would call that bad karma well it's taken you here can't have been that bad somehow it worked my bundle get there more easily more quickly than others with a very nice bundle of content of things of me until they're faced with death I was lucky my bundle wasn't very good of content of stuff so it happened and it popped

[Speaker 2] (2:33:55 - 2:33:55)

popped

[Speaker 1] (2:34:11 - 2:57:05)

being the master not even I'm not saying pretend that you're the master you're not pretending when you're aligned with what is you're the master spiritual master maybe only for a moment but that's all there is and then you stop being a master for a while and then suddenly yes the yes is back and you will notice increasingly in situations that otherwise would have produced the opposite a very strong no when you feel the yes arriving in situations that would be judged normally as unpleasant or undesirable or even completely unacceptable situations these things happen they happen in the now so-called bad things happen there's a sticker also that says something like that this is a paraphrase of it see what the power of that lies in an uncompromising yes to what is to the now what that happens what that does is you are no longer dependent on this so-called bad thing that arises in the now be it an inner thing an emotion that doesn't feel good be it an external event but it's accepted completely because it is and then something arises so to speak words are never quite right something arises that is greater infinitely vaster than that which appears only temporarily in the moment the form, the emotion the event the person the disaster with an uncompromising yes it could be an illness that only gives you that takes time away from you so you're forced into the now one of the greatest things that could happen to you time is taken away you're forced that uncertainty that you haven't got much time nobody has got much time it's an illusion nobody in this room oh I've got plenty of time and then either an illness comes or a sudden disaster or you get older and then you get less and less time shrinks and most people take refuge in the past when that happens they live in the past remember, talk about it anything to avoid the now so if something is accepted completely and what I'm saying now is put into words let's put it this way you're suddenly aware of the now the now becomes stronger than that which happens in the now you're more aware of an underlying field and spaciousness in which whatever happens happens whether it's called good or bad you're more aware at first it's in the background you sense something strange something peaceful at first you sense a peace in the background somewhere

even when something undesirable happens and you say yes there's a peace that seems to be in contradiction to what is happening then as it deepens you become you are more aware of the now as spaciousness than that which happens in it the event or the emotion and that's the essence of all you can take all the teachings of the ages spiritual teachings and if you extract the essence it is that but nobody has quite put it in that way because every age requires a new way of putting it and if you're trying to understand it mentally you touch it the worst only point so you're more aware of the now as an alive presence in which everything happens a spaciousness in which it happens how do you find the spaciousness you cannot grasp it or look for it because it's already here you find it simply by allowing allowing is how you find allowing the form that arises to be there be it an emotion or an event be it so called good or so called bad or so called wonderful or so called dreadful you allow it you are not opposing it which is people derive their identity from opposing this strengthens their little form the me the more the me can fight what is the stronger it feels in its pseudo identity it strengthens your illusory identity to be in opposition to what is the me feels stronger in it that's why people practice it so they're looking for themselves they're looking to strengthen their sense of self with what is and in a way in its mad way it works their illusion gets strengthened of me and they think they feel better in reality they feel worse but they call it I feel better now now I know who I am and the frightening thing to the little me is that when you allow the form identity the psychological form of me becomes loses its boundary it becomes more fluid being reactive looking for a stronger sense of identity that goes so when the form that appears is allowed to be whatever form that form takes that takes you beyond form that takes you into the spaciousness and more than that it makes you realize that the essence of who you are is not any form that arises it is not this physical form it is not the psychological form of me and that is wonderful freedom that is suddenly there and that can come to you even if you were in prison it could come from having to live in a reactive relationship to forms it doesn't mean that you no longer deal with things it is the opposite you respond beautifully now when you don't react anymore when response is needed so this is strange it is very strange to talk about something like this because every word is something beyond and you can practice here in these beautiful surroundings you walk across the lawn you walk on the grass under the trees a little piece of paradise and you watch there is out there there is an essence that you cannot grasp there are beautiful forms, yes but there is a greater sense in which these forms are embedded in which these forms arise and you can sense that as an underlying field of stillness so there is not much that you need to remember just remember this you are not here to achieve a particular state you are not here to achieve anything because if you think you are here to achieve a state to reach a state it takes you back into time and future and effort and struggling and frustration you are simply here to allow, to learn to be aligned with now does that take time asks one mind in this room yes and no on the outer realm of course there is time we meet here at a particular time we spend a period of time here but it all points to a deeper dimension of the timeless there are other forms in which the very same teaching appears there tend to be older forms you can, if you

look into ancient teachings you may find the same message but you have to extricate the message from the cultural accumulations around the teaching and the foreign languages and the strange words this is the same arising here in a way that is I am not dismissing the ancient teachings they are beautiful and if you are able to extricate the essence they still work for you and this is the same teaching but perhaps with an added empowerment because well this is good news and bad news at the same time I was going to say and I am saying fortunately we are running out of time when the ancient teachings arose they still had more time humanity could afford to be unconscious and insane for a few more thousand years now perhaps we have another hundred years during which we could afford to be insane and then that would be it the planet couldn't take anymore it would have created so much havoc they would have self-destructed through violence could we for a moment do we have any source of noise that for a moment we could turn off and we can simply enjoy the field of stillness ultimately stillness is within but the outer stillness can be a help a little bit of noise in this age of machinery paying attention to stillness underneath any noise that there may be there is a field of stillness usually if you are the mind you are only aware of that which arises the noises you would pay attention to that you might be interested in that usually humans would be unaware of the silence the stillness in which the noises exist out of which the noise comes into which the noise returns the field the underlying field of stillness while you are here and you walk out in nature there is a stillness all around of course there are also a few noises but I recommend this practice to you pay more attention to the field of stillness than to any noise you hear the noises are there anyway they are beautiful in nature at night the many many noises that many little beings that come to life at night make a noise there is an underlying field one could say it's the canvas on which in this case the noises are painted is the field of stillness so you pay attention to that there are certain kinds of music also where the that point like the Japanese flute we may have listened to it this morning we may listen to some more here they the sounds point beyond themselves to the silence out of which they come that is the deepest spiritual music where the sounds only point beyond themselves to the silence and so they enable the listener to enter the state of this is the beauty when you listen to silence you pay attention to silence the mind becomes still you cannot otherwise pay attention to silence the mind can only pay attention to that which arises the form, the noise that comes out of the silence the moment you pay attention to silence you've gone beyond thought because it's not with thinking that you can pay attention to silence because there's nothing to think about there's no form in it this is another little device that can take you to that state of consciousness that is beyond form the spaciousness and if you when you walk in nature it will deepen your way of being there when you pay attention to that field of stillness and you will have a great sense of sacredness that is all-pervasive throughout nature and that is beyond the forms that are beautiful too but there is a hole within which w-h-o-l a hole in which all these forms appear a field and that is the essence of sacredness so the noises that you hear are the equivalent of your mental noise of thoughts appearing and the silence out of which the noises come are the equivalent of

the inner state of stillness which is pure awareness prior to thought arising so these are little I call them portals sometimes the most powerful portal is perhaps allowing this moment to be that also takes you beyond form another portal is listening to silence especially out in nature that also takes you beyond form now the silence you may not have it all the time in this civilization it's hard sometimes to even find a place where there is silence but you'll be amazed even in a relatively noisy place you may still be able to become aware of an underlying field of stillness even in the midst of noise because ultimately it's within and in the end surrounded by heavy traffic

[Speaker 2] (2:57:06 - 2:57:07)

and

[Speaker 1] (2:57:08 - 3:04:49)

you're so okay with it this moment that there's great stillness in you that stillness comes with a yes to what is the compulsive noise persists with a no to what is remember that thoughts running through your head don't matter that much as you sit here there's a stillness underneath the thoughts and in between from the point of view of thought that is nothing an allowed

[Speaker 2] (3:04:52 - 3:04:53)

stillness

[Speaker 1] (3:04:53 - 3:52:30)

it's in everyone even those who are completely trapped in mental noise one could say so to speak underneath that there is a pool of stillness but they don't know it and that stillness as it arises when the screen of thought loses its density then from underneath thought stillness arises and the arising stillness is what I call the new state of consciousness and as you know all words are limited and the reason why we are here is to allow that to happen and in many of you even before you came here that arising was already happening so here there is an intensification of it or a deepening and as I pointed out yesterday you are not really here to add anything to your mind that's fine those you can go to lectures at universities and add things to your mind that's fine but the reason why we are here is not that pointers the words are not there as added baggage to your mind but they are simply pointers beyond that helpful pointers so we are here for the arising of presence one could say an evolutionary transformation because so far most humans have lived and are living in a very different state the normal state of consciousness which is continuous thought streams and identification with those continuous thought streams as a self a me so everyone carries a heavy burden of personal selfhood if that's a word that exists I think it does everyone carries the burden of a personalized me contracted and personalized sense of self and I say

burden because there is a heaviness to it and as you go through life you feel this heaviness and people perceive it as the heaviness of living another day and more stuff happening and another problem what's the point of it all the last straw that's the last thing that I need it so there's the burden and then there comes the last straw and it probably won't be the last and so there's the this heaviness of me I have to carry me around all the time and if that weren't enough there's the living past in me both personal and racial meaning belonging to the whole human race and the pain of that because humans have generated so much pain through living in such a way reducing their lives to a little personalized sense of self which sometimes tries to make itself bigger by identifying with a collective a tribe or religion or nation but it's the same heaviness identifying with a collective for a moment looks like liberation from a little personal me but it's the illusion of liberation in fact you've gone into something even worse even heavier so they've then humans carry pain inside from the human past emotional residue of emotional pain of suffering and they don't see it as that through unconscious identification with it it becomes part of one's personalized sense of self so it was heavy enough already and now it gets even heavier because the whole heaviness of human existence in a state of consciousness that could be described as ignorant not ignorant in the sense of not knowing enough but ignorant of who you truly are so you carry the burden really of the whole of humanity with its heavy past and believe it to be yourself and then you interpret whatever is happening around you through that and you can imagine and perhaps you know from your experience I know it from my past experience how distorted everything gets when you interpret the world around you through the heaviness of a painful often more often than not painful personalized sense of self of me and then you see all those situations out there and all those people out there that seem to have been put there by some demon to make my life painful that's the interpretation and that's what it looks like that's what the world looks like from that point of view ultimately illusory viewpoint perspective and then you begin to fight against situations and people because you perceive them as your enemies and then you create the world that when you switch on the TV that's what you see when millions live in that way not that each one manifests that condition in the same degree of intensity no the degrees of intensity the degrees of ignorance that manifests through you differs nobody in this room probably would perpetrate acts of terrorism or carry a bomb around on your body and go to a public place and then detonate it and eliminate yourself and another hundred people that requires extreme degree of ignorance but it is the same mechanism at work the same misinterpretation the same fighting the external enemy to get rid of my pain so that's the human condition and again the human condition is not the personal problem of yours it is the human condition now that personal sense of selfhood sometimes dissolves in the face of extreme danger we talked a little bit about it yesterday it can dissolve in the face of imminent death sometimes it can also dissolve in the face when there is intense suffering which of course is generated by that itself so the redemptive factor about the whole sad story is that the very suffering that it generates for yourself and others ultimately wakes you up too because you can't stand it anymore

so there is a self-destruct mechanism built into the illusion by the grace of God but that could take time unless you run out of time and so the alternative to needing more time for that to happen to become free and the alternative to needing more suffering needing more pain needing more drama until finally you can't stand it anymore the alternative to that is sitting here and in a much more dental way allow that personalized sense of self to dissolve because it wants to dissolve or rather something is emerging from underneath that wants to it's pushing through so when I said it wants to dissolve that's not quite true it doesn't want to dissolve it does and it doesn't it wants to continue it has a momentum but ultimately it also wants its own destruction yes the two are true and you can see it in excessive cases of extreme manifestations of that unconscious state that it seeks its own destruction if it can destroy others in the same process so much the better we can see it reflected in the events of past week you can see it in certain very in many people's lives that are very unhappy a self destructive urge in many almost addictive I certainly had it and it worked it self destructed itself now you may have this is a gentle way of arising of presence you may already have gone through more violent forms of transformation of suffering you've had your suffering and perhaps that's cracked you open there was this screen of mind and of thought streams and the density of pain and and identification with all that of me a dense heavy personal selfhood and then perhaps for quite a few of you something happened either to you or some in your surroundings to someone very close and it cracked open that dense density and whether it was some great loss or an illness or an accident or suffering or death of someone very close to you it the crack appeared and at first of course a crack like that is very painful nobody likes to be hit on the head and then comes you begin to realize the enormous grace that is suddenly in your life and that came into your life because of that and then so much presence begins to emerge through that crack one could say the sense of personal selfhood loses its density and something can shine through ah and with that comes a depth because you have no depth you have depth but you don't know it when there is only that screen when the crack appears suddenly there is a depth to you somebody that I watched on television the other day talking about the disaster of last week actually said a writer she said there was she perceived through the suffering there was a deepening a shift from type A personality and a deepening in the collective psyche of this country and that may be the case because all these things apply whether on the personal or collective level with that comes a depth and there comes a humbleness a humility no longer a me that needs to triumph or control and if it cannot triumph it can at least be triumphant in its misery because it's greater than yours mine is greater just listen to it and then the point is reached and many of you most of you perhaps all of you have reached the point where there's already presence arising not continuously it can get covered up again occasionally yes a personal sense of self can return even during our retreat the complaining heavy me is back it may happen to you it can come upon you suddenly as you sit here and you may have to run out of the room now don't let this stop you from going to the bathroom if you need to what are they going to think of me so it can suddenly come back the pain body can react in some people the pain body

would react particularly here because and again we haven't even addressed the pain body directly yet we will it may it runs your mind then that's you may have to run out of the room or you may get up and shout no no this is not right or it may shut off you're not hearing anymore it can do strange things and so since pain body except in very rare cases cannot be dissolved all at once but it can be seen now for what it is so when it arises all you it's necessary for you to recognize it so that it doesn't become of part of a heavy personalized me that is reactive and then interprets everything through that look at all these people what are they doing here and immediately interpreting through the pain and distorting through that and you're distorting of course your own life through that your own the view of me who I am and when you see it so there's enough presence for you now to see it when it comes you can't stop the pain body if it wants to come up it'll come up it's old pain you carry it inside but if you see it for what it is it's no longer that much of a problem it's a bit like a physical pain which in itself is not a problem it's painful yes but not a problem not the heaviness of problem unpleasant perhaps but if you don't label it even it just is it is a turbulence or it may be a heaviness or it may be a painful contraction whatever the predominant energy field of your pain body is there it is and it passes especially if you don't feed it with thinking along the same lines as the pain body same kind of thoughts to reflect the energy field of the pain body there's enough presence for you to watch it instead of allowing it to run your mind and then it becomes a me that's the fundamental difference when that shift has happened pain body is fine and it begins to dissolve it is no longer a part of the personalized sense of self then and that removes an enormous chunk from the heaviness of a personalized sense of me or self certain mind structures of course are still at work identification with mental images of me problems of self esteem and all kinds of things who am who I am an opinion about yourself or many conflicting opinions about yourself good enough not good enough who knows and and the same mindset creating opinion for others who they are not as good as me better than me a possible threat to my sense of self I need to defend or maybe I can incorporate them into me my sense of self I could be bigger with that and then I find a trophy wife trophy wife is an expression that I read it's relatively recent for somebody who chooses a wife because he's already wealthy and the last trophy that he needs is a good looking wife to enhance his sense of self so self esteem of course part of the sense of self now I've already removed we said that's the pain body is already when you are aware of pain body as it arises a lot of the heaviness is already gone what remains still is the mind structures and again you need to see those when they operate recognize them for what they are if you have problems with self esteem it's opinions viewpoints images in your mind of me of who I am me as not good enough not as good as better than and that varies some of the eastern teachers when they come to the west the western mind is very developed even the east has ego too but the western mind is even more developed and I read recently the Dalai Lama when he first came started doing some teachings in the west when he was quite many years ago he was with a small group of western students and somebody mentioned self esteem problem with self esteem and he said what's that? and it was explained to him and then he went from one person to

another and asked them lack of self esteem was explained to him and then he went from one person to the next and asked them do you have that? lack of self esteem and most people said yes I have that oh and probably not a single sutra of the ancient scriptures mentions that because when those scriptures were written the mind wasn't as advanced yet as it is now so to see that and here this is quite a helpful environment for you to see whatever arises either emotional particularly the heaviness of the emotions that are the past accumulated pain that lives in you as an energy frequency and to watch the mind thought stream hmm as it said it comes and goes and the more that the the washer arises the more the sense of who you are sense of identity sense of I am shifts from being this mental construct mental emotional construct which after all are only formations energy formations so your sense of who you are shifts from being believing you are those energy formations forms to being the observing presence that which sees all that another word that I used yesterday I always give you different pointers if one doesn't work for you the other one might you are the spaciousness in which the emotional and mental constructs and conditionings operate that's the liberation you cannot perfect or infinitely improve the construct the emotional mental construct if you improve it at one end then you lose something at the other there are always polarities if you become good at one thing then you lose your ability somewhere else so there it always exists it has the limitations of form and when you see your own limitations of form then that's fine the seeing there is something unlimited in the spaciousness that sees all that and allows it to be that is where you are unlimited that is the realm of that is the spiritual dimension if it has any meaning that's what it is that is your true nature as it's sometimes called beyond form and it arises simply through the arising of the witnessing presence that allows whatever is there at this moment to be and then you may become aware sometimes of that power that lies in that spaciousness that witnessing presence and as it arises more in you through you that becomes greater vaster it always was but now you realize that is vaster than anything that happens in it so it could happen to the most unworthy in quotation marks judged as the most unworthy and pitiful and seemingly deluded human being who had a life of sordid events it could and has happened can happen it does not happen through perfecting the me that would be nice everything would be neat and tidy and we could say we can now embark on a course like a university course where you have 101 and then you start from there the mind likes that because it's neat and tidy and you can finally graduate up to enlightenment but the eruption of that can come at any time and it comes often to people with very unfavorable conditioning often a very heavy personal sense of self or so heavy that it has inflicted pain on many other human beings can happen and then of course that pain is self inflicted and suddenly it goes so you cannot predict to whom this will happen and not even for many people it might not even be perceived as an event a particular event it could be a gradual dissolving but as it does and you no longer the shift now happens and you are the witnessing presence and you realize that's who you are and you feel that and not all the stuff that's been going on in your mental emotional field not that you deny it no you see it but you're not looking for yourself there anymore

emotional conditioned energy streams mistaking that density for who you are or for who that other person is so you become a blessing because when you have seen the reality in yourself and the illusory nature of identification with that mental emotional condition conditioning as the me entity then you're no longer imposing perpetuating and fueling that illusory sense of self in others by reacting to it because the illusory sense of self energized by the pain body they continuously strengthen and feed each other through reacting to people around you that's how it the whole thing keeps going and of course then you will see the density often still operating in others and you realize beyond words that is not who they are you were in the trapped in the same illusion and density means they are identified with mental emotional energy formations that is a heavy me and then you would say oh react to it that goes because only the me when you're still trapped in it strengthens itself through reacting to others so you can look through that density which perhaps that in the other person because you've gone beyond it in yourself and as you witnessed and as you continue to witness the same in you you witness it and allow it to be in the other person and by staying present with that being the observing witness and allowing it to be you no longer recreate the illusion of an identity making an identity for that person out of the unconsciousness and in that sense the Course in Miracles puts it quite beautifully there's a line which says whoever you meet becomes a witness for either Christ or the ego whatever you perceive in him or her Christ means that your true nature one way of putting it you could say Buddha nature so whoever you meet whoever you come into contact with any human being in your life will witness will witness means confirm to you the truth that person can confirm to you that your illusion is true the witness for the ego if you perceive that is the ego is the egoic me entity the density so whoever you meet can witness say yes I was actually right that's who he or she is so that person becomes witness for the ego and continuously through this misinterpretation the truth of the illusion the truth in quotation marks the truth of this illusion will continuously be reflected back to you and confirmed and the truth the truth the absolute truth also everyone you meet can also become the witness of Christ which is Buddha nature your true nature when you do not mistake the density for who that being is and that becomes part of your spiritual practice is sitting here other part of your spiritual practice is going out into nature we may talk about it in more detail also and so allowing presence to arise and then comes the part presence being there when you are interacting with others that only works if a certain level of presence has already reached been reached in you otherwise the moment you start interacting with others you will get drawn back into identification with mental emotional sense of self presence would not unless a certain level of presence has been reached which presence cannot sustain itself when it is around heavy mental emotional energy fields called people so people are really challenging wouldn't it be easy if it weren't for other people just nature and there are some people also spiritual people so to speak who begin who avoid interaction because it always sooner or later leads to problems I've had enough but that's the very ground where you are being tested and you can find out for yourself your degree of presence not in any judgmental way but it becomes so clear when you are with people and when

you are being challenged and of course most challenges will come through other people that's how it happens you may get challenged occasionally through a natural disaster but that's relatively rare you may live next to a volcano and get challenged by an eruption but it's rare so most challenges come through other people and then what comes in how do you meet the challenges of mental emotional entities coming at you and wanting something from you as they all do or fearing you and there by misinterpreting you completely so how do you meet the challenge of other people the challenge coming at you perhaps heavy pain bodies coming at you like a steam train or very heavy minds coming at you extremely problematic minds and people identified who have their sense of self in very heavy mind streams after I saw the film called Titanic there was a scene where they show in the bowels of the ship the steam engines at work and there are enormous engines that's before it goes down of course and they're and occasionally when I meet people who are very identified with minds the engines of the Titanic and you know what happened to that but quite impressive too so they are coming at you and then what can happen is I you meet it through presence and spaciousness of presence the alertness of presence the openness of presence and it comes there or you meet it through the reaction of the little me

[Speaker 2] (3:52:30 - 3:52:32)

it

[Speaker 1] (3:52:33 - 3:53:44)

re it comes it reacts and immediately you're drawn to the same frequency as that and that entity that's coming at you wants that it's not even an entity it's an energy field that's coming at you wants you to contribute to its own vibrational frequency so it'll do it's all unconscious of course it's not the person coming at you that doesn't say I want to see how much pain I can get back from that person they believe that they are right and you are wrong or whatever they believe or that you did something to them and so on but there it is so you can meet it presence openness which is non-reaction and that requires considerable degree of presence or you fall back into a little reactive me and you shout something back me I did that you did that to me I didn't do that to

[Speaker 2] (3:53:44 - 3:53:45)

you

[Speaker 1] (3:53:54 - 4:37:23)

that's only the beginning so even when that comes at you not mistake it for who that is that is not the reality of that person they may also come to you a suffering entity needing to tell you the story of their suffering perhaps they're coming for help how do you meet that how do you help increasingly people would be coming to you for help

because presence is arising in you and many people underneath their conditioning are ready for it so they may feel drawn to you because they see something in you but they're still immersed in their story and they're telling you their story and it may be a very complicated story very complex how could I what can I possibly say to that person the problem seems so complex and again are you trying to work something out to help or simply be there in that field of spacious presence that is so much more intelligent than the little mind and just hold the field of spacious that spaciousness that presence in which it seems that you don't know anything stay with the not knowing and there's the alertness of that state and then see what comes nothing may come it may be enough or a shift may happen in the other person because you're not giving reality to what ultimately is illusory constructs you're not giving that reality either through reaction or through getting drawn into the story completely yes you truly are in a bad way yes you truly have dreadful problems on the surface they look true it's looking beyond that before your presence can be sustained in human interaction go out into nature easier and even out in nature you have a choice now you can meet the tree you can perceive the tree through mental noise in which case you hardly really perceive it because immediately there is the mental concepts or you can perceive the tree through stillness or presence that is much easier than a human being to start with because the tree exists in stillness itself it grew it's growing in stillness it's even if you carefully if you stay with the tree or a flower see how still it is but it's alive it has its own intelligence considerable intelligence that beauty only an aspect of the one intelligence of course manifesting as this form but it's so still it's even surrounded by stillness it has no problems that's why it's easier to be with a tree initially than to be with a human being it teaches you the state of no mind no thought because it lives in that state anything natural lives in the state of natural original connectedness with the one everything in nature lives in that state of grace still that humans have moved out of because they've gone out from the one the source into fragmentation and multiplicity more and more and that's the human mind and the complexity of the human world lost touch with the original oneness innocence grace beauty it's still there but they were not there and so everything in nature can teach you the state of grace if you can be with it truly now you are not with it when you perceive the tree through mental noise that says something about it or labels it in one way or another has thoughts around it you're relating to your thoughts not the tree so it teaches that state of no mind but for you the state of no mind when you re-enter it after losing it for so many thousands of years you do not return to that level of pre-mind so to speak that the tree lives in the state of original grace you return to it you it is a state of rising above thought and all language has limitations so I'm just just a pointer humans are rising now above thought into the state of no mind which has certain essential similarities with the state of original connectedness that natural things and animals still live in and yet there is an added depth and an added knowing to it when humans return to that state after having moved through the ignorance of mental being identified with mind totally it was a necessary stage it seems in human development this egoic stage of growth it's coming to an end and it's critical because it cannot survive in

this form that state of consciousness the egoic state of consciousness cannot survive now the planet cannot survive with that so we return and yet it's more than a return in the state of having gone beyond thought thought can still operate when needed it's not that you forget everything thought still operates and operates beautifully but no longer a self seeking thought thought becomes free of a sense of self your sense of self is far vaster it is the stillness around thought and thought only is a small aspect that operates in there when it's needed and thought can be very powerful and creative when you need to create something but not as a separate me that needs something creating because you are part of the totality and the totality wants to create something through you and then thought may be extremely powerful when applied and you'd want to create something not because the little me needs it for its satisfaction but because the totality moves through you and it is then when humans become will become able to manifest to use a new age expression to manifest from within in ways that would now seem miraculous because now if they were able to do that now they would create even greater havoc than they are doing already. Imagine little egos manifesting what they want. If people to some extent they are manifesting of course the external world but manifesting in a more direct way so if you needed something it will immediately be there would be dreadful but when humans become free of the illusory sense of self and then power moves in also to manifest but not as a separate me that needs something as part of the whole the totality the one so in that sense thought the mind can be a powerful way of manifesting something but it won't be powerful until it becomes free of selfhood free of the illusory sense of self in there and so then also it loses its problematic quality the mind is no longer heavily problematic so that happens I rarely talk about those things because they happen naturally by themselves usually all I address is what is needed pointers that are needed to become free of that the rest happens so no longer we we are moving beyond being thought based mind based entities beyond and so in everything in nature can remind you of the state of connectedness but when you encounter that state it is not it is the same and yet not the same as the state of grace in which nature exists it is deeper there is a deep knowing to it but use anything in nature and be with it anything can be a teacher if you just stay with it for a while it could be a flower a little plant a tree it could be a river just be with it for a while and watch it and become aware of not only it but also of the observing presence so nature is the teacher of stillness and that is your opportunity here surrounded by beautiful nature I would advise that even if you have come here with a friend or partner that occasionally you take time to be alone with nature maybe choose one tree choose one flower one plant be with it for a while stand there or sit there and sense the stillness that is there and then all labels go a tree is far more than a tree every label reduces it immediately as if you knew what is there every mental label gives you the illusion of knowledge you don't know what that is how could you know it's a mystery it is a beautiful being the surface it looks like a tree perceived through the senses but it is a mystery everything is a mystery it's just sounds coming out of your mouth you may have heard the word self realization another pointer and that can easily be mistaken by the mind for knowing a great deal about yourself and you

might think that after 25 years of psychoanalysis when you have examined everything you can possibly examine about yourself that would finally take you to self realization that accumulated knowledge of all what that make up the inner all the conditioning the content of your mind but really I have nothing against it on its own level it's fine you become acquainted with the content of your mind and self realization doesn't mean that you know a great deal about yourself the closest you can get to it through words is to say that you don't know anything anymore about yourself from the point of view of mind of course you still have some knowledge when it's needed but really there's a space of not knowing it looks like ignorance almost yes from the point of view of the mind who are you I don't know and that's not a comfortable state for the mind I don't know who I am anymore I need to figure something out there's some a few I need to have a few thoughts in my head a few images that tell me who I am surely I need that and then the amazing thing is when you become comfortable with not knowing and there is some knowing in there but it's not nothing to do with bits of knowledge there's a deep knowingness one could say you're simply a field of aware presence if there's anything that you needed to know truly at this moment it would come out of that if there was anything that you truly needed to do at this moment or respond to at this moment it would come out of that unprepared unpremeditated it's there it's one could say the totality acting through you and it's just right and then you're back in not knowing because nothing needs to be known and then if you can be with another human being in that way you become a great teacher the great teachers and quite a few of you are destined also to teach but I'm not please no new identity no I'm considering a career change I'll try a spiritual teacher but quite a few of you are destined otherwise you're otherwise you wouldn't be here to become teachers either in a more formal way or simply because you can't help it it just happens through you but only because you no longer have an image of you as a spiritual teacher and you don't feel that you know when you are with someone as long as you feel that I know the answers just come to me and I'll tell you that spiritual teacher doesn't know the spiritual teacher operates from the spaciousness of not knowing from stillness alert alive stillness that is the teacher presence is the teacher no human entity is the teacher but the your true nature is that so in that sense you are the teacher but there is no personal identity that could claim to be a teacher the moment you claim to be a teacher the spaciousness and the openness of presence is lost and perhaps you can then teach from accumulated knowledge but it's no longer truly true and powerful spiritual teaching it loses the essence so the sooner you become comfortable with that state that from the point of view of mind looks like not knowing anymore the more effective the more powerful you will become as a spiritual teacher the strange thing just a little comment every time I walk in here or anywhere I come to talk there's always this strange feeling I have nothing to say what the first when I started doing this kind of teaching a few times the mind came because there's still of course there's a mind but it's not it doesn't have a lot of power it's just occasionally comes in with a thought what am I going to say I've said it all and then it's fine not to know what to say it's actually quite beautiful which would be the greatest nightmare for

the mind is to sit somewhere on a stage and quite a few people have had this nightmare I've forgotten my lines what am I supposed to say so you begin by being comfortable with not knowing in front of a tree or you look at the stars at night amazing the vastness of it all what could you possibly figure out in your mind about it what thought could possibly be in your mind that could be really meaningful in the face of that vastness the mind has to stop that was my earliest meditation I realized it later when I was a child I would often go out at night and look in awe at the Milky Way and the billions of suns because almost every star is a sun and the Milky Way which is just this luminosity across the sky and it's billions of suns and the vastness of space that's the greatest awe is the vastness of the spaciousness around it the distances the space and I would simply look many years later I realized oh that's meditation the mind stopped later on my mind wouldn't stop anymore it became more and more noisy until finally it gave up but so again here not knowing become comfortable with that it is not the state of not knowing that you enter when you drink some alcohol or take certain drugs because if you drink a scotch or something like that for a moment it can feel better because the mind can sometimes become less noisy less obsessive oh you become a little bit free of that heavy self after the second stiff drink and then but you're not moving beyond thought you're moving below thought you're beginning to move towards the plant realm which is beautiful for plants and so you drink a bit more a little bit more and finally it goes and you've lost consciousness totally so that it takes you but for a moment it feels good because it also takes you out of the mental me it can also activate as you move towards unconsciousness it can activate in some people they feel the pain body too they get violent after a few drinks and then they become unconscious so not knowing not in it's not that's not the not knowing that we talk about there is an alertness to that not knowing and you not know with your whole body there's an alertness throughout your being and there's even an alertness it seems after a while around you and that alertness is still but alive and that is pure intelligence pure awareness pure consciousness before it becomes a thought before it becomes something the ground I could ring this bell and the sound of this bell is perceived in stillness after the sound subsides there's stillness relative stillness not total but it doesn't matter ultimate stillness is within it is simply cessation of mental noise then a perception happens a form arises in this case it's a sound and then the form dies as every form dies sooner or later and what remains then is the pure field of awareness then another sound arises in the field of by voice and goes there's the undercurrent of awareness in which it happens that remains always unconditioned still pure consciousness pure just that so in any phenomenon that arises instead of being totally drawn into the arising phenomenon realize that in which it arises the spacious aware presence so there is that is the dimension that means then you know the world but you also know God the one continuously connected with that not connected you are that that is your true nature then that was put beautifully in one of the ancient Upanishads the ancient scriptures of India some of which were written a thousand years and longer ago 2000 years and it talks about the nature of God Brahman what is that what is Brahman what is God and it defines that like this it says not that

which the eye sees but that whereby the eye can see know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore not that which the ear hears but that whereby the ear can hear know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore not that which the mind thinks but that whereby the mind can think know that alone to be Brahman the eternal and not what people hear adore so there is the truth the closest that words could ever get to the truth is that and yet the truth is not in the words they point to it not that which you see that which makes seeing possible the field of aware presence not that which you hear that which makes the perception possible the field of aware presence not that which you think that out of which all thought comes the one intelligence the one awareness and knowing it not in a dualistic sense but knowing it as yourself your essence some people who realize that make them of declaring joyfully I am God but they were misunderstood and killed in many cases it's better not to say it thank you that Japanese flute that we just listened to ideally should be listened to in complete silence because that kind of music is not about the sounds it's about knowing the silence it's about the gaps between the sounds the underlying field out of which the sounds come into which each sound returns and when you pay attention to that one could almost say you are aware of something beyond and deeper that is actually not separate from the beauty of these forms that you see life forms not separate from it but deeper an underlying unity a field I'm using words for something that one cannot describe of course so just little sign posts and when you pay attention to that one entry point is to say that you listen to the silence now strictly speaking you can't really listen to silence because there's nothing there to listen to so what that really means is there is a state of attention that arises attention not tension a state of attention because that is the moment you pay attention to the absence of sound the nothingness either in between two sounds or the field that is there even while the sound is there there's the underlying field one could say the canvas on which the music is painted or the canvas on which all the sense perceptions are painted and the same when you watch when you see a picture you're rarely aware of the canvas you're only aware of what's on it so we can shift awareness to the underlying field so when we go into nature we say be aware of a field of stillness that's all despite the sounds here and there there's a field of stillness all around but it's an alive stillness it's not a kind of dead stillness you would get in a sound studio there's an alive stillness all around and that's the background to all of which you see and that is the dimension when you sense that one could also that is the totality in which everything appears a larger wholeness and when you sense that pay attention to that automatically thought activity subsides because all thought is to do with form and content thought itself is a mental noise and so usually you're drawn into identification with the thoughts sense perceptions thoughts and so here the moment you tune into that level you cannot think and be aware of that underlying dimension of silence you cannot think and listen to silence this is why it becomes a portal for you to simply

[Speaker 2] (4:37:24 - 4:37:26)

as if

[Speaker 1] (4:37:26 - 4:37:57)

you were listening to silence then there is an attention there that is not thinking just an alertness and what is that awareness prior to thought the awareness the field that is there before thought and after thought

[Speaker 2] (4:37:58 - 4:37:59)

there's

[Speaker 1] (4:37:59 - 5:03:55)

that thoughtless awareness beautiful it's still but very conscious and you could even while you listen to these words they are the words and there's the gaps between the words and you may come to a point as somebody said to me at the last retreat after two or three days he or she I don't remember said I'm beginning to enjoy those times when you sit there and don't speak almost more than when you speak and that when that happens to you it's working I'm not needed anymore that means it's working so here now there isn't going to complete silence here because we have various devices machines living in this civilization that's how it is we have all kinds of machines that make little noises projector camera fans whatever this that's how it is and yet you can still pay attention to the gaps between the words that arise naturally and what is there when there's gaps between words and you're aware of the gaps there's inner stillness you're aware of the absence of the words the gaps and there's a stillness so that's the state of no mind thoughtless awareness or presence and that also means I call it presence because you're completely in the now in that state whenever thought occurs thought is always connected with past or future even if you're thinking about something that's happening now your thoughts about it are words which come from the past or are interpretations which are to do with the conditioning of your mind but most of the time you're not even thinking about what's happening now most thought is concerned with past or future never fully alive to this moment never fully or very rarely that is the normal state very rarely fully present with your attention in this aliveness this fullness that is fullness and emptiness at the same time the fullness of life that is now because the moment the mind is waiting for a better moment than this one where the mind created entity the me is going to fulfill itself where the mind created entity the me is going to add more to itself and it's trying to get there and while I don't speak here see if you can so to speak dwell in that state of simple awareness and you may find that your entire body is permeated by a sense of aliveness in that state you are actually inhabiting your body with your attention your attention is not only out there it's also within it's a sense of presence which is everywhere and you are that see if you can just dwell in that and hold it without effort you may find as you first as you hold it a particular part of your body you may feel that more strongly than any other part of the body the aliveness it

could be the simple thing of your hands an aliveness within very subtle at first and to anybody who cannot feel it and you can do this whenever you tell people about the importance of inhabiting the body people who may not be ready to listen to anything else but who are tortured by their minds as most people are then you ask them close your eyes hold your right or left hand like this is there any way in which you can find out without looking and without moving your hand whether your right hand is still there that's a silly question but it works is there any way you can find out whether your right hand is still there you're not looking not moving it not touching anything and so what happens when that question is asked your attention moves into the hand and suddenly you feel an aliveness there that means you've entered the body with your attention that same aliveness you can then once you know what that means because there are people who don't know what I'm talking about when I say sense the inner body perhaps they have lived for years and years only in the head completely identified with thought once you can feel the hand that can remain becomes an anchor so that your mind is not always it loses some power the power to draw your attention in continuously with every little thought it absorbs it almost absorbs your entire consciousness and all your consciousness becomes thought everything is immediately transformed into form unaware of the formless the dimension of the unmanifested or the formless so as you sit here you can sense a generalized feeling of aliveness if you can feel your hand you can also feel the aliveness in your feet and legs and then all over the body subtle but it's there so you rest in that when I talk about it it still sounds as if there were duality that you are observing those feelings but after a while you realize that's only because of language it's actually part of the sense of presence is it's your presence the sense of presence is all over it's an entire body phenomenon so that you sink into that feeling you become one with it you are it there's such vast intelligence in the body DNA every cell has its own is its own manifestation of intelligence far greater than the mind the thinking mind you cannot control the functions of your body with your thinking mind hundreds thousands of things simultaneously would have to be coordinated every second it's impossible how do you circulate your blood how do you digest your food how do you whatever these organs perform keep the body at always the same temperature how do you make the cells reproduce themselves continuously how do you oh so much I can't keep up you would have to use the most powerful computers and they would break down even keeping the body alive for two seconds and that's the human body it's an expression in form of vast intelligence of course it's only a form it's short lived and the reality of who you are goes far beyond that manifestation of it what you see and feel externally is the manifestation an appearance in form that comes and goes it's like a smoke almost or a soap bubble or whatever anything any analogy metaphor whatever whatever work is short lived existence and then dissolves like that's how the body is it doesn't live for that long I'm always amazed when I look at old films that show people in a big city like say in the twenties they were running around the streets and they're all pursuing such important aims they're all almost dead now and they've been replaced by other people running around the streets in Europe you can get even more of a sense of

that because the cities are very old almost every building is old and so there are generations and generations and generations that inhabit the same buildings and they come and then they melt away and then another generation inhabits these streets and buildings and runs around and then it's gone and every little life thought this is my it's so important what I'm doing yes it's relatively important but not absolutely important it's relatively important whether you succeed or fail in the eyes of the world it's relatively important whether you're healthy or not healthy it's relatively important whether you're rich or poor it makes some difference in your life relatively important whether you're educated or uneducated it's all the level of your form identity yes it matters but it doesn't matter that there's something that matters more than any of those things and that is knowing who you are beyond that short lived entity that short lived personalized sense of self Jesus said that in the story of Martha and Mary Martha being anxious about getting everything done must get this done this matters it's so important and Mary just listened to Jesus and Martha said why don't you tell her to help me and Jesus said there are many things but only one thing that truly matters and she has chosen that one thing I assume that Mary was in a state of thoughtless awareness that's why he said it she was listening when anyway you're truly listening you're in that state there's no true listening that is not the state of thoughtless awareness because everything else is a mental commentary as every therapist knows every therapist who is effective eventually sometimes only after years and years of applying learned and acquired knowledge something else takes over and they become simple and when the client comes they listen truly listen and immediately a higher intelligence is operating and that does the work occasionally words may come they come out of that state of attention attentive listening so we are concerned with this activation of that higher intelligence here that then at first it seems a passive thing that we are doing just becoming aware of silence paying attention to gaps but as this becomes activated in you you see that it can it begins to run your life you live from there not anymore from here you can still use this up here but you live from a wholeness something so the body is short-lived and there is some there is an aliveness there it is an expression of the one consciousness appearing as a temporary form and that in itself is beyond time so to sense the body is an entry point into connecting with who you truly are it's a return journey we've had the journey outwards for a long long time into fragmentation more and more thought noise getting lost in the world getting lost out there losing yourself the famous story of the prodigal son the lost son who leaves his home with wealth squanders all his wealth and then loses himself out there and then at some point he begins to travel back home so it's a we are coming home really to ourselves not the conditioned self that which reveals itself as yourself a simple sense of I am ness not the little me ness a simple sense of beingness or presence which is the thoughtless awareness that has nothing to do with your story the only relationship that it has with your life story and your personalized sense of identity is that through all the ups and downs and sufferings of your personalized sense of self you've come to this point of realization it's taken you here in that sense it all worked even though it might seem from a conventional perspective that your life hasn't

worked very few lives actually seem to work truly and there are very few people who have that feeling that my life actually worked out the way it was supposed to it's all gone wonderfully many young people still have that idea of course and then things happen as somebody said to my mother she taught a woman very wealthy woman not my mother that woman very wealthy woman but unhappy said I never imagined my life to have turned out that way that was not what I imagined my life to be when I was young and so she is very unhappy because of the gap between the early imagination of how her life would be that survived in her head and it didn't life didn't conform to that early fantasy but the early fantasy remains in the head and remains the criterion by which they judge their present life and the present life doesn't conform to that fantasy and so they are unhappy I know a woman who is doing wonderful work she is a teacher at school she has incredible empathy with children that is obviously her life mission she has changed too many children's lives poor children disadvantaged children and wonderful work but she has an idea in her head of how her life should have turned out and now that idea says I'm only a school teacher this wasn't supposed to happen I was going to be an actress and there's great unhappiness because she can't fully see what she's doing and she's looking still to fulfill the fantasy to get rid of the unhappiness it's a conceptualized way of living of having some living with an image an idealized me an idealized story in the head and one day she called me and said I'm dreadfully depressed I said why? I applied to do a commercial on TV as a starting point for my acting career and I even got invited to the what?

yes and she was turned down my life has come to an end that wasn't the story that was meant to happen a conceptualized sense of self and this is what almost everybody is burdened with in the head the storyline of me and life always throws something in there to make it go not quite right occasionally you can get control of it and it's great when it works you're getting what you want that happens too you wanted the big house and the big car and the career and you did you made it but in there again there will be something that wasn't meant to happen oh not like that there was a film one or two years ago about a man who meets a beautiful woman who turns out to be the devil and she grants him six or seven or whatever wishes and every wish is an idealized story of me and each one turns out to be dreadful at first he gets what he wants but there's always something in there that makes it a failure there's an amazing truth in there because no matter what you do and where you go you will encounter there's always a polarity to any situation there isn't the one fulfilling permanently fulfilling situation that you can find wherever any situation you go into any relationship that you have any person you meet place you live job you get recognition from the world telling you you're important and you will always taste the other polarity there's something in there that no that wasn't there's always the two whenever you look at any situation the Buddha says wherever you go you will find some suffering but only if you look to a situation to satisfy you if you look to a relationship to a situation to fulfill your sense of self to fulfill you if you look to a place a situation a person a circumstance a condition to fulfill you to

enhance and deepen your sense of who you are sense of rootedness of beingness then it won't satisfy you for a moment a little while it can and then something will come up oh no in the midst of that very desirable situation there's always another side to it you may get so famous that you can't go out in the street anymore

[Speaker 2] (5:03:58 - 5:03:59)

there's

[Speaker 1] (5:03:59 - 5:45:14)

a riot whenever you walk and do your shopping you lost all your freedom and you thought when I become a star my life will be fulfilled can't even go out anymore that wasn't supposed to happen and then all these people who come and want something from you want to be near you are they really interested in me you wonder or is it all false and then you have to look hard to find anybody real just one little example and we know it with relationships the ideal man and the ideal woman turns out not to be the ideal man or the ideal woman so to have an expectation of phenomenal the phenomenal world to do something for you ultimately the expectation is that you will find yourself in or through a situation a condition a person something out there that somehow that fulfillment you will find your fulfillment yourself through that and then life becomes a very frustrating thing because the world cannot give you that and if you don't know it that any situation is short lived it comes to an end or it no longer satisfies you because something else happens in it oh when you don't know it it's very frustrating this life nothing ever seems to work out it's not really meant to work out it's very liberating to see that that the story and that conceptualized sense of self and that image in the mind that that is never satisfying it's always frustrating so we step out of that when you see it you can allow the world to be the way it is without expecting something from it that it cannot give you and that is yourself and then when the expectation is dropped you become present suddenly to now and then you can go into situations without the expectation that says please fulfill me any situation which could be a new relationship a new place to live a new job a new this a new that please fulfill me when you don't do that anymore you accept the way it is right now with the polarity that it has there's always up down good bad and you accept it for what it is it's fine and you move to a new city or new big house it's fine I don't expect anything from that I'm not looking for myself in that because something will come up to spoil your pleasure and suddenly the world becomes a satisfying place because you don't expect to be satisfied by it anymore and suddenly this moment becomes a satisfying place to be because the illusion that at some future point things are going to improve and I will find myself through this or that has gone away so this is through seeing that through attaining in the future you won't find yourself anywhere in the future in any situation and suddenly what's the alternative? You look around where do I go from here? This looks all very depressing that means anything I do is really pointless isn't it?

So what's the point in doing anything? That's the mind still trying to work something out and suddenly you discover something long forgotten and that is this moment the now because until now the now had been a stepping stone to the future a means to an end reduced to that and if you look back you will see that almost everything you did was a means to an end because you were hoping for the point in the future the fulfilling point to be reached to complete yourself and your story in the head and now the now suddenly is no longer a means to an end you become aware of the now as it is it's not in the service of a mentally projected future or mentally projected self the now is sufficient unto itself and you discover how liberating it is to acknowledge the now miraculous truly miraculous everything is that little leaf moving in the wind don't imagine that a life that continuously misses the one vital dimension in your life missed continuously because you're looking for it somewhere else oh my god so this is truly awakening and you awaken into now now now now in many cases the now as judged through external appearances may not be such a wonderful desirable place when you look at it through the mind that says well here I am stuck in this boring job behind a desk every day is the same or here I am not enough money in this place it's not nice to live in here I am with a body that is not healthy here I am living with a wife or husband that's making me unhappy stuck but if I leave him or her who knows my situation might be even worse so I better stick around the external appearance of the now may not always appear to be a good place you may be in prison you may be listening to this tape in prison and I'm not trying to convince you that you are in a good place or say it's not so bad after all just you'll get out eventually in the state of presence there's something there that is greater than the forms that appear in your life vaster greater that is why many people who realized this realized it precisely when their life circumstances were very unfavorable dreadful in fact and suddenly they realized a deeper dimension of incredible power and aliveness and they perhaps were surrounded by prison walls and barred windows and suddenly they discovered incredible aliveness flooding their entire being but they only got there because they reached a point of no longer running away from this moment that seemed so unacceptable and nothing would be more normal than to run away from an unacceptable situation run away from it internally try if only fantasy world if you can't get out of prison at least you can create a fantasy world so you're running away from it and you're resisting it and you're creating great unhappiness through resisting whatever is at this moment and so those people perhaps a prisoner suddenly gave up the resistance to the now suddenly gave up trying to run to some mentally created future when they let me out in ten years I'll be fine and with the letting go of resistance to now came the liberation from external circumstances inner liberation and the liberation from the conditioning of the mind and suddenly there was a peace an alive peace they're still in the same place what's happened well simple they might not even have known it what happened you surrendered to this moment you surrendered to life you stopped saying no that's what happened it's simple that's what that's all that's what happened is it that simple why didn't I do this before my whole career as a criminal was unnecessary I'm talking about the person in prison because even in his criminal activities he was looking

for himself where he could never find himself and he thought other people were obstacles to finding himself maybe he even killed somebody or he robbed banks or he surely if I have enough money through that I will find myself so that's what happened and then it happened to some people with life threatening illness great unhappiness and suddenly a shift what happened you said yes to this moment is that all maybe if I had done it 10 years ago there would have been no illness but it's never too late and miraculous possibilities of transformation are there when you align yourself totally with this moment if healing in the case of somebody who is ill if healing is possible at all it will happen and I've seen many cases of people becoming healed through complete surrender to what is this is not resignation I'm not saying it is not the surrender that says OK I'll better resign myself to the fact that I'm ill and that I'm not going to make it no that's not that's not it there's a mental projection there's a conceptual image of me as an ill person and some egos hang on even to that because if nobody has given me much attention when I was healthy at least now they're giving me attention and some egos need that it's the only way they can get some attention all these doctors are giving me attention these important people it's working I'm somebody not every illness is like that but that is an aspect that you can often observe in certain people so this is not the resignation that's okay I'm ill there's nothing I can do no that's not surrender is you surrender to this moment not a concept in your head that you resign yourself to you surrender to what is at this moment and what is it that is here I am and there may be certain feelings there may be a certain disability there may be a certain pain somewhere in the body there may even be an illness that you can't yet feel and yet they've told you that you're very ill but this is what is there's there's the disability I can't walk properly anymore whatever the disability is it is this moment not projecting myself and saying okay it's not going to change you might as well accept that that's future projection simply the is-ness of this moment it is and then you go from there every moment and I've seen occasionally people with serious disabilities that they've had for years and I've looked into their eyes occasionally in and in some of them I saw great unhappiness and dreadful burden of having to live in that way a very unhappy sense of self very understandable that you should be complaining inside when all the people around you seem to be okay and fit and walking everywhere and you can't move without assistance it's so understandable that you become an unhappy self and then I've seen a few and looked into their eyes and see a light shining an absence of an unhappy entity they were simply looking no complainer anymore inside no complaining entity that says why me and so on and builds an identity around the illness the disability there has been acceptance of the unacceptable and the shift happened surrender happened I saw this man this is an interesting story when I was a graduate student I never finished my graduate studies but transformation happened and that was it so that the PhD never happened but there was this man where I was used to go to eat every lunchtime at the university in the graduate center they would wheel in a man in this wheelchair and he was always surrounded by several people and one person would get his food and another person would feed him because he couldn't move any limb and another person

had to hold up his head and somebody else was holding a napkin under his chin and then the food had to be put in his mouth and when I first arrived there I saw him and I asked who is this and they said he's a teacher he teaches here and he has this incurable illness and they have given him two years to live and these are his graduate students and he could only produce croaking sounds and there was always one or two people who could interpret what he was saying and one day he came into the building downstairs and I opened the door for him and he came wheeling in his wheelchair and he looked at me and I looked at him and I was surprised by the absence of unhappiness in him there was no unhappy me there just looking and that was just a few seconds and I saw that something happened he surrendered and then I left the university and many years later maybe ten years later I saw at a news stand the cover of Newsweek Magazine and there he was on the cover of Newsweek Magazine in his wheelchair and the headline said Master of the Universe so he had become the most famous physicist in the world and he was still around after they had given him two years to live ten years before and he produced creative thinking and his thought processes hadn't come to an end no not yet but there was no longer a self associated with his thought processes from having to think so you can see how what this first of all the predictions didn't come true it was a miracle that he continued to live and then it was a miracle that somebody like that could become make such a contribution no complaining entity was left in him he couldn't have survived if there had been a continuing conceptual sense of self complaining about the universe and itself and then I read the interview in that magazine and one thing he said there I remembered one statement he made in the interview about his life and he said who could wish for more he now speaks through some mechanical device who could wish for more so whatever your situation miraculous things happen when the uncompromising yes to what is arises in you because you see the futility and the madness of not aligning yourself with what is and you see it so completely and so there comes the uncompromising yes even if it seems unacceptable it's yes it is it is the first person who write to write to me from prison in the meantime I've had a few more letters from prison of people who read the book who understood the meaning of surrender of inhabiting the body and the first person who wrote to me soon after the book came out said I'm practicing the teaching my life is transformed and I'm teaching other prisoners and I have another 15 years to do here and it's okay my life is transformed and last year he got out nobody knows why he wasn't even eligible for parole I don't know the details of it but somehow he got out I'm not asking how but his happiness no longer depended on it that's why it happened his fulfillment no longer depended on it Jesus said all the same things seek all the just thought you needed them they will be added oh thank you it's not a big deal anymore you appreciate it but it's no longer that you know it have made it that doesn't happen anymore it's nice of course it won't last either nothing lasts so here the key word perhaps this afternoon is uncompromising the uncompromising yes no matter what it is you don't make a deal with life that says okay if you give me this and that then I'll say yes is it a deal no it won't work no matter what I say yes to what is just now this moment and whenever the shift occurs from the state of no to the state of yes

that is surrender surrender is the shift from the inner denial and resistance to this moment to the openness and the embracing and the yes to this moment and that we call surrender now that shift you may have to go through many times even in one day because you will be able to detect more and more quickly within yourself the state of non surrender the state of resistance because there's more presence in you not complete mind identification anymore and through increasing presence you can detect much more quickly the states of no which always result in suffering and unhappiness and so you detect the no and you see it oh there's another no and there's the suffering that goes with it okay this is the no to what is you see the futility of the no and the yes arises by itself you don't have to create a yes just seeing the futility of the no to what is and the yes is there and that's you surrender and a few minutes later maybe another no comes in some other little situation and you detect it again and you surrender how long you dwell you persist in a no depends on your degree of presence to some extent also on the heaviness of your pain body that is not anything that not something you can do anything about you either have a heavy pain body or a less heavy pain body but here too you can be present with the pain that arises through your pain body and what can you do when it comes there it is there's the pain the emotional pain it is it's here what can you do yes and yes to what arises within and you detect it immediately as pain if you don't detect it the pain body becomes unhappy thought movements and so we have an unhappy me a personalized me we talked about it this morning that carries the heavy burden of human pain accumulated human pain and makes it into a self a heavy self that is hard to live with you yourself find it hard to live with and others around you find it hard to live with your problem to yourself and to others to the whole world your one big problem this is not a personal insult you are moving out of that in any case already but I was in my unhappy state which was almost continuous a walking problem and wherever the walking problem went it found problems so surrender is the shift from the no to the yes and so detecting the no is enough oh that is and you shift yes now some lucky ones have one enormous thing to surrender to in their lives most of you are not that lucky one enormous thing would be one great disability like the one I described this person in the wheelchair one great disaster one enormous loss something very so called wrong in your life from birth from very early on one heavy thing and resistance mainly focusing on this one thing and then in a case like that it is possible for complete surrender to happen all at once and the no never comes back but most of you have to surrender to many little no's little things arising in your life in the course of a normal day many little irritations little no's to what is and that's your practice it's fine it just takes a little bit longer than if you were faced with one huge thing in which case you might be unhappy for several years could be unhappy for the rest of your life there is no guarantee that the shift will happen but there's a greater possibility unless presence is arising as it is in you so even while you're here the next few days still detect the state of non surrender in yourself there it is and then the shift happens automatically into okay this moment is okay actually so you reenter the now you lose the now you reenter the now ways of reentering the now alertness suddenly returns you could suddenly become alert of sense

perceptions oh you've been perhaps completely unaware of your surroundings for the past few minutes or hours there's a sharpness of suddenly alertness there's the sensations and an alert field or you sense your inner body and that's immediately you enter the now or you feel your breathing flowing in and out present you have to be now in the now otherwise you cannot sense your breathing but whatever it is it is always the state of alert presence that returns or you may catch yourself looking in the mirror and suddenly you see this unhappy face and you realize oh I've been in the now for the past two hours and didn't even know it something in you of course wants to continue with the now the little mind made me wants to continue it's an energy field an energy form it doesn't want to go the pain body doesn't want to go it wants to renew itself through your mind so you may also detect in yourself and this is perhaps the last thing this afternoon to want to tell you an element an addictive element almost I use the word addictive as far as unhappiness is concerned people carry something that one could carry something within that one could almost call an addiction to their own suffering a refusal to let go that's of course strongly associated with the pain body the pain body doesn't want to go it wants more pain and so detecting the state of no sometimes means detecting the pleasure so called that is being derived from unhappiness it's not really pleasure to the ego it's pleasure the body really knows that it's pain but the ego loves that pain because it's sense of identity gets stronger in the state of unhappiness an unhappy me is stronger than a happy me the fictitious self an unhappy me is more contracted so it's a habit it's an addictive habit and that's an amazing thing to detect in oneself one's addiction and you don't have to accuse yourself as I shouldn't be addicted no just to see it there's pleasure in unhappiness this is strange and then you notice that the unhappiness isn't really pleasurable at all it's pain mistaken as pleasure the ego mistakes pain in pleasure it's such an adventure to be engaged in this transformation of human consciousness it's funny too if questions arise we will perhaps tomorrow end and or Thursday we will look at some questions that may arise concerning the arising of presence not questions like explain to me I haven't quite understood yet what presence is I need a few more explanations not but questions to do with perhaps the pain body in your life so we'll have time for questions tomorrow and or Thursday and maybe even answers we may also have a time for silence not compulsory of course we may do that tomorrow recommended a period of silence perhaps sometime during the day tomorrow half a day or so and then perhaps again nothing here is compulsory some retreats are like and you may have attended one or two of those and this is quite gentle oh if you can endure the heat for another five minutes and surrender to it perhaps we could listen to a song and have something on a CD tomorrow somebody also would like to sing a song we may have that also tomorrow but I have a beautiful song here that is simply illustrates what we are talking about and just listen to it for five minutes Kirtana who cannot be with us he lives on the west coast sings a song entitled who you really are which I believe is on track six on the CD and so just we'll just listen to that and you will recognize the message and the song

[Speaker 2] (5:46:28 - 5:52:13)

and tell me what remains who you really are who you really are measure success by the things we accrue measure success measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success by the things we accrue measure success measure success measure success dance to see what's yet unworthy choice to throw this chance away this is your lifetime page your attention Where all the prayers are sung From the cycle of bondage and misidentity To wake from the dream And finally realize The truth of one's being Before the body dies So before the final scene is passed See the screen on which it's cast See what's seen, the story I knew You'll see Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (5:55:28 - 6:59:58)

Is it possible to just take an object, pick it up? This is a stone and a flower lying on top of it. But I've already interpreted it now through the mind.

I've explained to you what it is. Is it possible to be in your room and be in a relationship to objects that is non-conceptual where you allow each object to be, each object that you perceive so completely that you're not interpreting it or labeling it? So you pick something up.

You feel it and you see it. It has a presence. And you let it be.

And you're seeing it through stillness. At first you might think, well certainly the thinker thinks that this is not possible. You as the thinker thinks no.

And besides, what's the point? I mean, I've got other things to worry about. It's hard to see it seems such a simple and insignificant thing to do that and to make that as part of your spiritual practice.

And you could start with the world of objects, nature also, of course. But we relate to objects when we talk in terms of relationships. People think relationships to human beings.

You relate even more to objects because wherever you are, you are relating to the world of objects, so-called inanimate, not really inanimate, but so-called inanimate objects. You're always picking something up. You're sitting somewhere on something, handling something.

It's the world of objects. And usually each object that you handle is a means to an end. You want to achieve something through it because in the mind-dominated state, each moment, or rather the one moment, is always reduced to a means to an end.

Thereby you miss the fullness of life that can only be in the moment. And so the reason, of course, why we are here is to allow a transformation of consciousness to happen so that we are no longer trapped in a conceptual reality, trapped in the conditioning of the mind. And we saw, we addressed that on our first day, how that is so closely related and actually the cause of even the great evils that we see.

How does a terrorist become a terrorist? It is an extreme illustration, an extreme manifestation of being completely trapped in a conceptual reality where you reduce other human beings to mere concepts or labels in your head. And once you have reduced another human being to a concept or label in your head, you can do anything to them and you won't even know it anymore.

You will feel nothing. You've cut yourself off. You've cut them off.

You've cut yourself off from the deeper levels of your being. And you are totally mind-run, run by the mind, by the conceptual mind, by thought. And so, really, here we have the origins of what we could call evil.

And that is, Jesus said, they know not what they do. Forgive them, for they know not what they do. That process, in other words, is completely unconscious.

It is the very essence of unconsciousness in the way that we use the term here, which means to be unaware of who you are beyond thought, of who anybody else is beyond thought. Complete lack of attention or awareness. Totally trapped in conceptual thinking.

And so, but everybody to some extent is trapped in that, not perhaps to such an extreme, but this is simply a terrorist or anybody else who perpetrates acts of violence, inflicts suffering on humans, has reduced those humans to a mental concept. And then, you can do anything. But that is a very common, it's a normal way of being, really.

It's just more extreme. And when you see it in an extreme form, you can recognize the madness of it more clearly. And people do it to themselves.

They reduce themselves to concepts in the head, through self-images and opinions about yourself, which you partly received since childhood from parents. Beliefs, concepts, opinions. This is what you are.

This is how you are. And then, you have a conceptual sense of self. And again, very limiting.

And the conceptual sense of self is never at ease with itself. It's never enough, because it's a fabrication of the mind. So it is so, to step out of that is the transformation of consciousness and realize what depth there is to you as a human being beyond conceptual thought.

And actually realize that true intelligence lives beyond conceptual thought. Conceptual thought comes out of true intelligence. It's one of many possible manifestations of it.

But when you are trapped in this one little manifestation of intelligence, then your life is reduced to very little, very limited entity, problematic entity. And then you inflict suffering on yourself through conceptual thought. You begin to have dialogues with yourself and telling yourself something, who you are, and not enough.

So, to gradually become free of being dominated by conceptual thought, continuous labeling and interpreting and judging. That's why to pick something up is such a powerful spiritual practice. It seems so insignificant, and the mind might tell you that you have better things to do than pick something up and look at it.

At first it may not be, thought may still be there. And then perhaps there's a moment when there's just looking, just the awareness, the perception. Very different qualitative difference in that perception from a conceptualized, from a perception reduced by conceptualization.

And then you sense that even a stone has an aliveness to it. Which, nothing is alive when it's seen through mental concepts. Then the stone is more alive to you than another human being is to a terrorist, to take that as an extreme example.

So that is a beautiful practice. It's a gentle way, see if you can relate to objects in that way. The strange thing happened to me many years ago, when after a night of suffering, intense suffering, a shift in consciousness happened.

And the suffering conceptual entity, me, dissolved. And then I woke up the next morning, and I looked around the room, and the first thing, I saw these objects, they were all familiar. I had never given them much attention, because each object in my room was a means to an end.

And then I picked something up, a pen, a few other little things. They're so alive. And there's presence, there's beingness there.

I didn't know what that all meant. It was just a surprise, an astonishment of how alive the world actually is. I was astonished at the aliveness of it all, but I didn't know why I was astonished.

I didn't know that my mind wasn't commenting anymore, because otherwise the mind would have said, Oh, you see, you're not commenting anymore. And that could happen to you. This shift happened to me by accident, one could say, and here it happens, one could almost say, by choice.

You have the choice to step out of that conceptual reality. At first you may not succeed. You may pick something up and immediately think about, Oh, I mustn't think about this.

Or there's a moment of simple awareness of that perception, and then immediately the mind says, Now you've got it, that's it, you're right. And then, of course, the mind will say something, Okay, now, okay, you've done that, now what's the next thing? And somebody said to me once, You always talk about the present moment.

We've heard it now, it's an old hat. Present moment is... One writer in a newspaper who came to a talk said two things.

One thing he said in his article, Of course there's nothing new about the present moment. Teachers have spoken about it for thousands of years. But I must add to his credit, in the next sentence he said, There's nothing new to the present moment and everything new to the present moment.

Because the mind is looking for the next thing always. Whenever you become impatient with the present moment, the mind is looking for the next moment. So, okay, you've got that, understood.

Yes, present moment is all there is. Okay, we know that now. What's next?

I have mastered the present moment. Certificate on the wall, master of now. So it's not an achievement.

The transformation of consciousness isn't an achievement. Or anybody who could say, now I have achieved it. It's a continuous, it's continuously new.

So, I recommend that every day, once or twice, you walk around your familiar room for a few minutes. And whatever you happen to look at, stay with it for a little while, a few moments or one moment. Language is strange.

I sometimes use that expression, a few moments. It doesn't exist. There's only one moment.

It's just a way of speaking. And stay with that and see if you can let it be so completely that thought around it doesn't arise. If it arises, okay, then you know thought is arising.

You're not fighting it. It produces more thought. Thought is arising.

And then you watch the thought. You're not trying to do anything. You could fall into the trap of trying to be thoughtless about it, free of thought.

And, in fact, it's the non-trying always means you need to get to some point in the future. It could be the point where you are free of thought. But the state of thoughtless awareness is already arising in you anyway.

So you don't need to try. Just be gentle and allow it to be there. And so there's an alertness and a stillness through which you perceive.

And now you perceive actually much more deeply. There is a depth to whatever you perceive that before wasn't there at all. Even so-called inanimate objects suddenly have a presence, a beingness, a certain aliveness.

And imagine that depth that is already there even with so-called inanimate objects when they are perceived through stillness and non-conceptualization, what depth there is to natural things, the world of nature, how suddenly that deepens. And how you deepen, you discover how deep you are. That stillness is very deep.

Whereas before you were a shallow, nothing personal in that, it's a mind, a shallow being because mental conceptualization, no matter how complex your mind is and how much you know and can talk about and think about, it's always shallow. It always moves on the surface of things. There is no depth.

You could have the most highly developed intellect without depth. Just full of knowledge. So suddenly you discover the depth that there is to you that you are so much deeper than any set of concepts that you have in your head about who you are.

You and your past, which is of course limited, and your story, the story of you and your past. So it's the discovery of a depth. And that depth, it is fulfilling, that is so fulfilling, in that depth what disappears is fear.

Because that depth is a rootedness. You sense that you have deep roots in being. Whereas in the conceptual world, you live in fear because you have no roots in being, no depths, that every conceptual entity, every little me is extremely fearful.

They might be pretending that they are not, but there is always an undercurrent of fear. So one could say, and the stronger your form identity is, the me, the stronger also the fear that is underneath it. It may be unconscious.

It may be covered up by a display of confidence. But it's there. And so this is also where fear goes.

As a conceptual sense of self goes, and you don't derive your sense of who you are from your story anymore, then you become free of fears, because there is that depth in which you feel rooted. So you and that which you perceive suddenly acquires a depth. And that is particularly important when you relate to other human beings, because what makes human relationships so conflict-ridden and problematic is the fact that they are all conceptual relationships.

Once you live in a conceptualized reality, you've constructed it for yourself. You construct that conceptualized reality for everybody that you meet in images. And you may not have deadened that other person to the extent that a terrorist or a criminal who can kill without feeling anything, because he calls that person something in the head, and that reduces the person to a label or concept, and then anything is possible.

It is unlikely that you would reduce a person to such a degree, but the same principle really operates in human interaction when you reduce another human being to mental concepts and opinions. So, and you can see how you then relate. If there is a depth to even a stone that you pick up and you see it through stillness, perceive it through stillness, when you relate to another human being, what depth there is, what depth you can sense through your own in the other person.

Even if the other person is still full of mental concepts, and even if the other person is still relating to you through his or her screen of concepts. In other words, they have a set of opinions about you and think they know you through the set of concepts and opinions. They think they know the reality of who you are.

And it may be that the other person still operates through that screen. And the beauty is that when you no longer impose that screen, then it is actually possible to look through the screen that is in the other person. You see the screen, but you don't give it all that much attention.

You don't take it to be the reality of who that person is. You realize it is the human condition. It is a manifestation of the human condition that has been the human fate for many thousands of years.

And you don't manufacture a personal identity for that person out of that. And then say, now I really know who he or she is. Whereas the truth is, now you really know who he or she is not.

Now, the true meaning of forgiveness is not to mistake that screen, which often is energized by the pain body, which is old emotional pain accumulated over millennia in the human collective psyche, because of that very dysfunction. Because all that pain has continuously been created. Each human created it for themselves and for others.

All the enormous inconceivable pain and suffering inflicted by humans on other humans, and they didn't know what they were doing. But that pain, because of that, and we must call it dysfunction, because of that, there is such an accumulation of emotional pain in the human psyche, the collective pain body plus the personal pain body from your lifetime. And so that amplifies very often that conceptual reality with emotion.

And so your old pain flows into that madness. It's already madness, and now it becomes even more mad. So forgiveness is simply, it's not, the way people practice forgiveness doesn't really work all that well.

I forgive you. And it's interesting that Jesus talks about it a lot, the forgiveness of sins, and that they say he has the power to forgive sins, and he tells his disciples, you have the power to forgive sins. What does that mean?

What is sin? Forgiveness is simply not mistaking that conditioning of the mind that

operates for who that person is. So if you mistake the unconsciousness, we could call it the movement of unconsciousness, unconscious conditioning, if you mistake that for the reality of that being, that person, that's non-forgiveness.

The recognition that this is simply an overlay, a screen, and ultimately there is nobody there. There is no identity in it. There is no personal identity in it.

The recognition of that is forgiveness. And then you don't even need the term anymore. The recognition of that is so simple.

You don't need to say, I forgive you. There's nothing to forgive suddenly anymore. So true forgiveness happens only when suddenly, you have seen so clearly through that there's nothing to forgive anymore.

Forgiveness, no, what for? And that applies to yourself because some people can't forgive themselves for something. Now, it is very likely that there's far greater consciousness in you than 10 years ago.

So you have moved through, you have manifested the human condition in one way or another. You had to. So it's likely that you did certain things that at your present level of consciousness you would not do because now there's far greater presence.

But when you look back, there can be a tendency for the mind to manufacture an identity for yourself out of the movement of unconsciousness, which is the human condition that you inherited. Being born into this world, you became part of that. Everybody inherits it.

Now, the mind, the mind-made self, is always looking to enhance its sense of self because it's never enough. And if it cannot find good things to enhance its sense of me-ness, it will find bad things and identify with that. As long as I have an identity, I'm okay, it says.

So a favorite thing is to identify with something that you did and make a personalized sense of self out of it and say, That was me. I did that. So the movement of unconsciousness becomes for you a self, an identity.

And that is, the egoic structures work in that way. So an essential part of many egoic little me's is that they haven't forgiven themselves, let alone others. They don't forgive others either.

But they haven't forgiven themselves for something. So they derive their sense of self from the movement of unconsciousness. Totally conditioned human unconsciousness.

And then, perhaps through suffering that you inflicted on yourself through that, gradually something awoke and there was an awareness that came in. Oh, my God. So when the

moment the awareness comes in, then you see it, and then there's the danger that you fall back into thought and immediately fall back into a false identity.

Me, I did that. So it is so true, the words of Jesus. The last words he said in a normal state of consciousness, he would say, Look what you did to me.

You'll see what you get. You'll... whatever the mind would say.

And forgive them for they know not what they do. They are forgiven already. They know not what they do means they are completely unconscious.

That's the modern translation. And so you might ask, so what about responsibility? Is nobody then responsible for what they do?

If there's nobody there, they can't be responsible. But they will suffer. They inflict suffering on others and on themselves.

They go through hell. They create hell unconsciously. And gradually, through the suffering, the awakening happens.

For you, it's important to know that you do not mistake the movement of unconsciousness for somebody. That you manufacture an identity either for yourself or for others out of that. And so the beautiful line in the Course in Miracles that I quoted the other day, whenever you meet somebody, whenever you are with another human being, that person will become a witness to you of either Christ or the ego, whatever you perceive in him or her.

So you can perceive the ego and make that real, say that is who that is. Or you can look beyond that screen and what is called Christ is simply your true nature beyond the conditioned entity, Buddha nature. Christ, your essential reality where you are connected with the one, the source, where you are not separate from that.

And that is the depth. So the mind may try to take you out of that depth, cut you off again from it. But it's difficult now because it is so clear.

The depth of who you are and that there is nothing to fear there. There is only fear as long as you are trapped in a mental world of concepts. And could it begin with something as simple as picking up an object in your room holding it and looking at it and waiting, the moment comes when suddenly there is just the looking, just the perception.

And it happens within a field of stillness and there is the depth suddenly there. And it's peace too. Suddenly your perceptions happen within a field of peace.

They become peaceful, an alive peace. And then that becomes a new way of being in the world, non-interference to a large extent of conceptual thought. It doesn't mean you cannot use it.

You are holding a pen, simply seeing it, and then somebody comes in and says, what is it that you are holding? And it's a pen, you say. Now you know it.

You haven't lost the concept when it's needed. It's there. When it's not needed, it's not there.

Or it may occasionally still come and yet lose its heaviness because you realize there is more to it than that. So you are no longer completely trapped in it. It's recognized as a concept.

It's recognized as a thought around it. So just as you can be with an external object, you can also be with thoughts and emotions within yourself. And they are just there.

Instead of, again, bringing in concepts into what you feel, for example, just feel. Not make a story out of that which you feel. Just be aware of what you feel.

Just the feeling quality of it. And for many humans, what they feel is fear. Especially, I used to feel it especially at night.

But during the day, continuously, it was in the background. But at night, waking up in a state of terror almost. And if that happens to you, it's residual fear.

It's lived in there. It's part of the pain body. It's lived in there for years.

To simply, just as you are with an object, be with that fear without making a story out of it. Just feel that, the feeling vibration of it. And then you allow it.

Allow it. And again, even there, there can be a peace around it suddenly. Simply through saying, okay, there it is.

And not imposing an interpretation on it. Perhaps even the word fear can go. It is just that.

And then the miracle is, whatever you give your attention to in that way, which is not imposing anything on it, also undergoes a certain change. Because you cannot, your consciousness is not separate from anything that you perceive. And physicists have discovered in their experimentation in the subatomic world, that the observing presence, the consciousness that conducts the experiment, influences what happens.

And in many cases, it makes it happen. And in many cases, when they think there might be a particle called such and such, a little while later they discover it. And you can see how closely related the external world is, and your state of consciousness, how they are one.

And when you begin to interact with things around you, people around you in this new way, perceive in this new way, changes happen in that which is being perceived in this

new way. I would go so far as to say, I sensed it, but I cannot give you empirical evidence of this. Even a stone that you hold, and perceive it through stillness, instead of deadening it through concepts, changes happen in the molecular structure, even of that stone.

And it's suddenly more alive. Not just to you. It's suddenly more alive.

Because you and it are not really separate. So you can see the incredible transformation that is here, that is not just in this little space here. Everything gets transformed through that.

You don't need to want to transform it, it happens. Your state of consciousness determines your world. This is true even in the unconscious state.

If you live in a world of chaos or nightmare, inner and outer are one. Just to see that when I go into nature, and again I cannot give you empirical evidence of this, because I know it directly. I cannot tell you how I know it.

But when you go out into nature, and you perceive nature in that way, nature fulfills itself through your perception of it. It suddenly knows itself, and its own beauty and depth through you, because you are not really separate. When you look at a tree through stillness, it's not just that it deepens to you, the tree, the tree deepens to itself.

And so nature is so important, because we talked about yesterday how important nature is, it can teach you stillness. How you can use nature to enter that state of consciousness. It helps you, but also you need nature, and nature needs you, so to speak.

Ultimately you are one anyway. You need nature, and nature needs you. And when this transformation of consciousness happens, one could say that nature also wants that to happen, because it is important for every natural thing that you go through.

It finds its fulfillment through that too. So when you walk through nature in that way, and perceive, it rejoices, because it knows itself through you. You are not separate from it.

It knows its beauty and its sacredness and its depth through you. That's how important you are. And that's, you can transform the world.

Not as a little me that says, I am going to transform the world. But you, now when I say you, I don't mean the you with its little history and its little, the little personal me. The depths of who you are, the consciousness that you are, the unconditioned consciousness, beyond the little conditioned entity that you are temporarily in this form, this physical and psychological form.

But there is the vastness of consciousness that is the essence of who you are. That is the

stillness, unformed, unmanifested, the ground of all being. Out of which the whole cosmos comes every moment.

So, truly, you have the power to redeem the world. And could it start with such a simple thing as picking something up and just perceiving it through stillness? And you will know what I mean then when I say that whatever you perceive in this way undergoes a change too, not just you.

Every human being that is through healing that is not reduced to a label or a concept in your head and is, you look at that human being through stillness, something happens there too. No matter how unconscious that human being seems to be, how strongly that human being manifests the unconscious human collective condition. And that is true healing.

Healing in its deepest sense is to be with a human being in that way of complete, spacious openness, stillness. And there, something changes no matter how mad. And I use the word mad in the sense that it is a normal state of consciousness, but no matter to what an extreme that human being manifests the normal mad state of consciousness, there are only degrees of madness, something happens within.

If a stone becomes transformed into a tree through perceiving it in this way, you can see how a human being becomes transformed, but you are not wanting to do anything. It happens. And so one could say that you dissolve unconsciousness.

It's being dissolved. To some extent it happens in this room. I am not doing anything as a little entity.

How could I? But there's no thought in this head about who you are. And that is a wonderful thing.

That's why I know you. Unfortunately, this is the biggest retreat I've ever had, and there are so many people. I love the personal interaction and hugging.

Last time I hugged 120 people at a retreat, and that took a long time. And now we have almost 400 people here. And yet it still works.

And I have this... I know each one of you. In your essence, I know you.

And that's all that's needed. When you truly know beyond concepts, beyond thought, that's the new state of consciousness. And this is why there's a field of presence here that does not just come through this form.

It comes through all these forms that are losing their density, mental, emotional density, and identification with the density as me. And as the density is becoming less dense, something shines through it. And that's where you...

the depth is suddenly there within yourself. So all these fields of consciousness, which is really what you are, a field of... It looks like a walking human being.

And at the end of this retreat, you walk out of here, back to where you go. But really, you're a field of consciousness, like seeds moving out into different parts of the world. And then you begin to perceive and relate to the world in this new way.

And you'll notice things around you change. People around you. Those who are not yet ready for change may suddenly disappear.

Conditions change. Situations, conditions that you're in. And you don't need any of these changes to make you feel better anymore.

Watch the one thing that can be quite a challenge, and that is your pain body. The accumulated pain. Although the new state of consciousness is arising, for a little while you may have to live with old, accumulated pain.

And that is not such a big deal once you know it. Once it's no longer made into a me, a personal sense of me, my pain, once it no longer becomes identified with the story of me, then all you have is you're suddenly an unhappy human being. And that's who you are.

That's when the pain body, the emotional vibrational frequency of that, moves into the mind and gets mixed up with the memory of your life and who you are and an identity derived from that. Then you have an unhappy me. And when the pain body does that, it's continuously replenishing itself through your thought processes.

It gobbles up the energy of your thoughts, which are all negative when thoughts are aligned with the pain body. So now there's enough presence so that the pain body is no longer able to link in to the mind and become part of your sense of self. And then all that's left is a field of heaviness or turbulence or tightness here.

Energy trapped. Fear is a contraction. It's a tightness or sometimes a turbulence.

Or heaviness. Some pain bodies are predominantly sad or others are angry. And so now you know the pain body.

You know it directly. And you watch it when it comes. It will try to trick you so that it can use your mind again.

And then it becomes, again, you're back identified with human pain and becomes a me. But when you see it for what it is, you can actually perceive it, sense it in the same way that you perceive an object in your room and just look at it, so to speak. Feel it.

Look at it. Give it attention. There it is.

But now this, you also sense when you watch, pick something up and perceive it through stillness. As it deepens, one could say there are two things now that you perceive. One is the object that you're perceiving.

The second is you become aware of the field of stillness itself in which the perception happens. You become aware, so to speak, of awareness. This looks like duality, but that's only because of language.

One could say you become self-aware. In other words, you're looking at something, perceiving this through stillness, and you see it and you feel it. So there's the perception of it.

And then you sense that there's also the very power that makes the perception possible as one could say it's your attention, a still attention. I gave the example yesterday of ringing this bell. And again, here instead of seeing something, you're listening to it, which is another wonderful way of listening to sounds without interpreting them, without any kind of labeling.

And the sound arises, and at first you're just aware of the sound, and that's fine. You give it your complete attention. Then the sound dies.

What's left is the field of attention. And then you can know that field of attention. It's not that you know the field of attention.

It knows itself because you are that awareness. Even while you're listening, you're aware of the perception and the underlying field of attention or stillness. And there's no reason why you couldn't go into the middle of a noisy city.

And there's all the traffic and all the thousands of people moving about. And there's the underlying field of attention. Stillness that can no longer be disturbed by anything.

Once you know it in yourself as the very ground that makes all perception possible, then no matter where you go, it's there. And I'm talking about that now because when you feel the pain body, the same thing can happen. There's not just the turbulence or the heaviness or tightness that you feel.

There's also the awareness through which you can feel that, which is so much vaster than anything that could arise in it. Pain bodies look threatening at first. Big monsters.

And then the tendency is when you... Oh, I don't want to look at that. But when you look, and this is an old motive in fairy tales and mythology, when you face the monster, it's no longer a monster.

And you know that even from nightmares, when you're running away from some dreadful thing that's pursuing you, it's dreadful. But the moment you turn around, it gets

transformed and suddenly looks relatively harmless. Oh, is that all it was?

And so many people never want to face the pain. Oh, no, don't want to go there. But if they did, oh, is that all it is?

It's contracted energy? Heavy? And it's not me.

It's just a stagnated, non-flowing energy field. So it's not who I am? No.

How could it be? You are the aware presence. And there's that.

And so the very secret, and this is the secret, I'm telling you now the secret of life. Now, all you have to do, it's like here's the key, but you still have to use the key. In any perception or awareness, or wherever you go or wherever you are, there will be things happening, arising, internally or externally.

That's the world. Things come and go. Forms, inner emotions, thoughts, outer forms, people, events, some good, some bad, whatever the mind calls it.

Giving attention, yes, to whatever there is at this moment. And you cannot give full attention if you are at war with the present moment, then of course you can't give it your attention. So giving attention to what arises implies that you say yes to the moment, and then you give it your full attention.

Otherwise you can't give it your full attention. But there's more. You give attention to what arises, and you are aware of that attention itself in which it arises.

One could call it also an alive stillness. This is the undercurrent that is continuously there in whatever happens. So there's the event, and there's the space in which the event happens.

And you stop seeking yourself in the event, whether it's external or internal, a thought, an emotion. You're not looking for yourself there. That's me.

I identify with some external thing. It's me, personalized, reactive relationship. Because you're looking for yourself somewhere.

I have to find myself somewhere. And you never find yourself truly, only a conceptual image. And therefore there's fear, because I haven't found myself.

And so you know you're no longer seeking yourself in anything, because you already know that you are the underlying field in which it happens, the spaciousness, the stillness in which it happens. Even if it's turbulence, that means knowing yourself, non-conceptually. And that means the world is no longer a threatening place, because nothing that comes can threaten who you are.

It's like saying nothing could threaten the space in this room. Hock, you can do anything. You cannot destroy the space in this room.

And it's the essence of this room. There wouldn't be a room if there were no space. The very essence of this is the spaciousness.

And this is an external kind of, I'm giving you an analogy, of external space is similar to that inner spaciousness. And ultimately what we perceive as external space is an externalization of that inner reality, the space of awareness. And it's indestructible.

We could do anything. We could even make an enormous amount of noise and bring in a heavy metal band to put in here. The moment they leave, nothing ever happened.

Just as still and spacious as it was before. And that's the true meaning, again, I'm quoting again these beautiful lines at the beginning of the Course in Miracles that summarizes it all. Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. Knowing that is the peace of God.

And could it start with a simple thing, such as picking something up in your room and looking? Yes. And then beginning to live in that way.

And now you'll find life will challenge you. Your new state of consciousness will not go unchallenged. You will move back into situations that are challenging.

Be with people that are challenging. Mind comes back at you. Pain bodies come back.

Now there are always two possibilities with any challenge. And any challenge says, give me your whole attention. I matter.

This matters. Totally and absolutely. Give me your attention.

And then it wants to be drawn into it. Yes, this matters. And not knowing that only one thing matters.

Ultimately. Everything else is relatively important but not absolutely. It's not saying not honoring the things of this world.

You're honoring, you do what you have to do. In that sense, you honor it. But ultimately, only one thing matters, and that is knowing who you are.

It's not a selfish thing. The only true thing that you can do for the world is to know who you are. And then everything changes.

Only that matters. But the world will tell you, and the world is the mind, and other people's minds.

[Speaker 2] (6:59:59 - 6:59:59)

This matters.

[Speaker 1] (6:59:59 - 8:04:06)

Come on. Surely you should get upset about this. Oh yes, you're right.

And even in the worst disaster, of course it's very hard not to react when something so disastrous happens as last week, collectively. And one almost feels, I have no right to be at peace in this situation. Do I have a right?

Do we have a right even to look for peace in this situation? It's the only thing that can save humankind, peace. So it's more than the right.

Your duty is to look for peace and to find the peace. And even in such a situation where you watch the TV and, oh my God, and even there you can suddenly sense that vastness. That perhaps quite a few of the people who died a violent death, and I mentioned that at the beginning the other day, they may have also known it in the last few seconds of their lives.

It often happens just before death. And we don't know that. This is not what you see on the surface.

On the surface you only see the dreadfulness of it. And then there's the vastness in which it happens. Still, always, present.

Present. A form dissolves violently. The essence remains.

So to even perceive disaster, whether it's your own personal disaster, which happens sooner or later, because death comes, that's disastrous to the person. Big disaster. So that comes, and be with it.

You've died already. That means you have this false sense of identity, a conceptualized sense of self, is already dissolved. There's nothing to fear anymore.

Fear is only not knowing who you are, mistaking that for who you are. There's nothing to fear. And then when death, the physical form comes, it's actually sacred and beautiful, and you recognize that.

If any mind in this room says, and then what happens? And after that? Is there more?

And then you find yourself in paradise, and the mind says, I wonder if there's an even higher paradise. Yes. You don't deserve to be here, says the mind.

So you'll be challenged by the world, by the mind, by the pain bodies in the world. And then one of two things can happen. You get drawn back into thinking that it matters and

reacting as if it matters.

In other words, you lose that presence. It's obscured. You can't lose it.

It becomes obscure. But the density returns. You become a reactive little me again.

Your own pain body becomes activated again. This can happen. Challenges do that.

Or the challenge, through the challenge, presence intensifies in you. This happens to some people even who have never heard or read anything about this. When they're faced with death or a serious accident is about to happen, a moment comes when there's enormous presence.

And sometimes out of that action arises and they are saved or they save other people. And it just comes out of that state of consciousness suddenly there. You can see now which way you go.

The challenge can pull you back into unconsciousness or the challenge can make you more conscious. And once you've reached a certain level of presence, presence is flowing through you to a certain degree, it is more likely that any challenge will intensify presence. Not inevitably.

The other can also happen. In which case you'll get drawn back and after a while you'll know it. And you'll step out again.

And the mind will attempt to make some identity for yourself even out of that and say that you're not good enough and you're never going to make it or whatever it says. And then you observe that also. That's what the mind does.

It wants to give you another identity. It's trying its best to give you an identity. Not good enough.

Now I know who I am. I'm not good enough. Well, at least now I know.

So you can go both. Even if you get drawn back into reactive little me, it is not likely that you will be lost again for too long. Presence suddenly is back and then you step out.

And you'll often notice whenever it happens, of course, you lost the now. You got drawn back into time and mind and the world. And the world of problems.

The heaviness of problems. Not realizing that there are no problems. You believe again that there are problems.

I'm saying there are no problems because there's no problem at the present moment. Challenges, yes. A challenge can happen.

But it doesn't turn into a problem. It needs a problematic entity that derives its identity

from a situation for a situation to become a problem. And then it's continuously revived and elaborated upon in the mind long before it ever happens.

If it ever happens. Probably won't. And long after something has happened it's a problem in the mind.

And there's a problematic me. And again having problems the little me likes that. Because the more problems I have and this is unconscious the more important I am.

I have real problems to worry about. The little me hangs onto that too because that also gives you an identity. You define your identity in terms of your problems.

Many people do that. Unconscious of course. Anything for an identity.

So you move back into a world that is still to a large extent mad. Not that that is the reality of who any human being is but that is the density that covers up the reality in human beings. And others are awakening.

Like yourself and others. You will meet also more people that are awakening as you awaken. And you will draw to yourself people who are ready to awaken and often they will come and maybe they don't know why and suddenly they may ask a question.

And then you become still and see what comes out of your mouth if anything. So your challenge is continuing to perceive the world and to interact knowing the field. Knowing this is the true meaning of now.

What is the deepest meaning of now is the field in which it happens. Nothing can happen anywhere else except now. Everything has been changing in your life.

You've gone through many changes but one thing was always the same. It was always now. Because that's the essence of who you are.

Because the now is the field in which everything happens. Now is the unconditioned consciousness out of which the whole world of the conditioned arises. Now is you.

The essence of you is the now. It's a miracle. So all there is to do and it's not a doing is to know the now while things happen in it to continue to know the now as yourself.

This afternoon my suggestion is that as much as possible we keep noble silence externally. The mind will do its own thing and you can watch that watch that in the now you can still be present with that. And as the depth happens in you more and more you may perceive the mental activity as surface patterns up here.

Sometimes huge waves come and go and sometimes little ripples and yet there's a depth. So there's mind and it doesn't matter that much anymore. The thoughts to some extent still come and go although there are gaps more and more between thoughts.

Yes, beautiful. Thoughts come and go but they don't matter that much anymore. You don't believe in each thought and it draws in your attention completely.

So let the mind be. So from lunch onwards or after lunch, there may be a few silent tables at lunch time and then after lunch if you can just be in external silence and as much as you can in inner stillness. That's there anyway.

Let the mind do what it wants. Perceive nature in that non-conceptual way. Be simple and just with what is until you need to use speech again.

Maybe in the evening you may be doing something. That's fine. It may be strange if you sit at a silent table unless you've already done quite a few retreats, in which case you're used to it.

If you haven't done any retreats at first it seems uncomfortable. There's a discomfort in you when you sit with the people and nobody is speaking. The same discomfort you might feel in an elevator.

You step in, there are one or two people in it and should I be saying something? And to simply you can watch the discomfort and then it goes and then it's actually OK to just be there without feeling the need that you need to say something. Just be there.

Nice practice in an elevator too. Just be in an elevator. Not here, but when you go back to the office.

Any elevator, no thought between you press the button and while you're waiting for it, no waiting either. You have little moments in your life, your everyday life I mentioned picking up things and just looking. Little moments when you're not waiting but simply be completely, fully totally here, in which case suddenly there's thoughtless awareness.

If you're totally here, there's thoughtless awareness. To be totally. Another one I often suggest to people, you get into your car, shut the door and before you put in the key stop.

Length of time doesn't matter as long as you stop. Even if it's only ten seconds. Thirty seconds.

And then put in. Nobody can be that busy that they cannot spare ten seconds. But the mind will tell you that you don't have ten seconds.

The stream of mind stepping out of that as much as you can. The stream of mind is the internal stream of continuous thinking. It externalizes itself as the continuous compulsion to go from one thing to the next and you never catch up with what you have to do.

It's always the next thing to do. While you're doing this, there's already the next thing to do. And this is only a means so that you can get to the next thing.

And that's an externalization of the mind stream. And so stepping out of the mind stream as much as possible, as often as you can. You know now how to step out of the mind stream.

And it's just a... Alertness returns. There's an awareness of sense perceptions.

You may feel your inner body suddenly. You may become aware that you're breathing. And, most importantly, you're aware that you're aware.

You're aware. It's more important how often you step out of the mind stream than how long you stay in that state. It's not timeless anyway.

How often do you step out? And nobody is so busy that they cannot step out periodically even while you're on a computer screen turning around and maybe there's a flower on your desk. Watch that.

It's especially important for people who are watching screens to sense the inner body so that some attention remains here. Otherwise it flows out continuously. And everything is conceptual on that screen.

I don't have one, but I know about it. People have told me. I know a little bit.

I know that these letters appear on the screen and people think they're communicating with other human beings, but it's just little letters on the screen. So if you cannot communicate through that letter on the screen, at least you can be in touch with yourself. And then perhaps you can be in touch even with that other person, but it won't be through the letters.

In another way, the connection will be there. We will look at questions that may arise out of the now if they do tomorrow. We can't know that now.

Maybe no question will arise anymore. All questions may have dissolved by tomorrow. So, vital questions, I would say, I'm not discouraging you from asking questions tomorrow, but vital questions, not abstract, conceptual questions, vital questions, I would say, you already have the answer to yourself.

If you truly need to know the answer, become still. Ask the question and then let go. If you need to know it, the answer comes from within, out of the stillness, which is the vastness of intelligence itself.

How could it not come? If it's not vital, the question will disappear in the stillness. You never needed to know.

You just thought you did. And there's a lot that we don't need to know. Many of you know the story, I've told it quite a few times, but there may be some of you who haven't heard it.

The Zen Master who became famous through just one thing, he would never explain anything. Whenever people asked him, please explain to us the meaning of Zen, which of course is already an impossible question, all he would do is raise his finger and look at you. Some people got it.

Of course, those who didn't get it, they asked, did you hear the question? Are you sitting there as a field of alert stillness or as a heavy person, heavy psychologically speaking, with a lot of accumulation in the mind, baggage? Are you home in this now or are you trying to get home?

Do you actually feel rooted in the now or looking for a better now? Trying to get home. Even when you're at home, trying to get home.

Being at home in the now, that's your home. And it's no longer a means to an end. This moment is not a means to an end.

That's an amazing thing. And even picking something up, a glass of water travels to your mouth in the same way that yesterday we started by pointing out that you can pick something up and look at it without the interference of labels, concepts. You can perform an action and be completely present with every stage.

It's not picking this up is not an inferior now to it reaching my mouth. But this is how most people live. Every moment is a means to the next one.

And the drinking itself, already somewhere else, it's a means to an end. At first it may only, from time to time, you're able to perform action in that way. Simple actions perhaps at first.

Where every movement is self-contained, it's just, it is fulfilling. Fulfilling not the end result in the future. The idea of being present with what you do is contained in ancient Japanese tea ceremony, for example, but it's become formalized now after hundreds of years.

You just go through the motions. It's become purely a technique for many people. But originally it's performing an action in which, or a sequence of actions in which no action is a means to an end.

There's a fullness of attention there. And that means there's a quality in what you do suddenly that is absent when the doing is a means to an end. A qualitative difference, you can actually feel what quality means when you compare an action that is a means to an end and an action that is done in the state of presence.

It is of high quality. And if you should be, if you were making something as part of your action, engaged in some kind of manufacturing something or building something, doing some kind of work that creates a structure in whatever field, whether it is in the arts or

writing or anything that you're creating something, whether physical or otherwise, the creation reflects the state of consciousness and the quality will be whatever then is the end result of that present action will reflect presence.

It will emanate presence. Whatever is created in the state of presence when it's there, and it's not necessarily even a work of art when it's there, but this is the essence of all art, is that all great art emanates something that it still has an energy field of that state of consciousness out of which it came. So when you look at great art, it has a quality that is very hard to define, even art critics don't know how to define what is the difference between art and not art, and what is the difference between literature and just fiction.

Nobody can exactly say what that is. They've tried to write books about that. So it cannot be grasped or defined, it is an ineffable quality that is a reflection of the state of consciousness out of which this form arose.

And now the beauty of it is you don't need to become an artist because your whole life is this work of art. Your whole life and the conditions of your life, that is your work of art. So whether or not you're engaged in making something, in one way or another, everybody is making something, the external structures of your life.

So this quality is not there when it's a means to an end. So anything that is a lot of what is being manufactured in our civilization is a means to an end. It doesn't contain that essence of presence.

It's done because it's a means to an end. We need to produce enough to make a profit. So you produce one after another.

And so certain things have labels that say handmade and they are more expensive. But even that of course is not a guarantee that there was presence there. If there was, then you can feel it, you can sense it.

And even if you were just sitting there all day, not doing or making anything, that also you emanate the quality of presence directly then. And that is the highest form of healing. And inevitably sooner or later some people would be drawn to you because they sense that.

They can't say exactly what it is. But they sense something and so they want to be close to you because it feels good to be close to you. And that's the direct emanation of presence.

So you have the indirect emanation through works, something that you do or make or create. And you have a direct emanation of presence. And presence is and even I don't want to offend people to whom this word is distasteful, but presence is the presence of God.

Something shines through this form. This form has become somewhat transparent. And it's just a question of it's all the same.

There isn't my presence and your presence. It's nobody's possession. It's nobody's attainment.

There's nobody who can claim anything. I have attained presence. Who are you?

And so who are you? And the true answer is well I am presence. So how can I attain presence?

My presence is greater than yours. Just Egos can still sneak in at any stage still. And then that is your task is to become a transparency for presence.

Not as a future goal. The moment you have a future goal the transparency is actually lost. There's a density again because future goal implies a mind projection striving towards that now.

It can only be transparent now by not identifying with labels and concepts. So what happens collectively in this world, in this country depends on the degree of presence of consciousness that can come through the seemingly individual human beings. That's why Jesus always said I'm not doing anything.

It's not me. He even said don't call me good. Because that would affirm a form identity as my ultimate reality.

What Jesus called the Father is a term he had to use in a patriarchal society so that people would listen to him. Presence would have been too strange. And to say Dao, a Chinese word, wouldn't have meant anything.

There is somewhat, there's less identification now with form. This is why there's greater openness collectively to presence. In the past there was still very great identification with form.

And you couldn't have gone anywhere and nobody would have understood a single word if you had not spoken to them through the conditioning, the mental collective conditioning of their particular form. Eastern, whatever tradition it may be. So Jesus had to use the form of the Old Testament terminology, language to be heard.

But now, there's less identification with form. And this is good, you can actually see the truth, the same truth expressed in so many different forms. There's again the danger if you have been associated with one form for many years, it can happen that you become close to seeing the truth in other forms.

Some very strict Buddhists don't want to listen to me because it's not Buddhist enough. And some very strict Christians wouldn't want to listen to me, it's not Christian enough.

So before we go on to questions, just one more, this transparency is so important.

That's your task at any moment. Not to affirm your form identity. And perhaps not even to defend your form identity.

Often things happen as you move through life and interact with people where your form identity, the psychological form I'm not speaking your physical form is threatened relatively rarely, directly, but your psychological form of me is very often every day, somehow, somewhere at work or at home is threatened by someone who says something to you. If only you're driving along and another driver shouts something at you. You idiot.

But he doesn't say it like that. But when you sense then that comment and the energy behind it is like a blow and it threatens, it shakes your form identity. And deep down, even if you know very well that this is a very unconscious person, deep down the little me says maybe he's right.

And immediately comes a reactive mechanism in order to repair the injury to your form identity. Because it's painful to the form to be injured. Not physically painful, but emotionally painful.

And so you would shout something back and that repairs that. Or you would simply, perhaps you're beyond shouting back, but in your mind you would be saying you unconscious little worm. And that also works.

And in some way you may even be right. But not absolutely. So you have affirmed his form identity as he affirmed yours.

And for a few minutes or half an hour or an hour after that other things would come into your mind that you could have said but didn't say. And this can be quite interesting, the mind playing it out again and again with increasingly better versions of what you could have said. And then you say, why didn't I say that?

God, I should have said that. That's so good. Or if it's a different situation and this is a person that you meet regularly, then two days later you meet that person again.

The situation is long gone and then you say that thing that you've worked out in your mind. And... So there's an interesting thing, but I don't advocate what I'm saying now for people who all their lives have been extremely shy and fearful and never spoken up and said anything out of fear.

For them there are other practices. But not when your form identity is threatened in some way, not to resist that threat, simply allow that. Nothing really has been threatened, just a concept, a mental image.

And so somebody says something or shouts and instead of rushing into a repair job, just let it be. You idiot. It happened occasionally that while I was driving in those situations and once or twice the driver was very close and got very confused because he was looking at me and saying something similar and I was looking at him and there was no reacting force, nothing there to react and he got very confused.

And he shouted the same again because he thought, I must be deaf. And when you do that you suddenly, what at first seems like a weakness, you can sense an enormous peace and power and a very deeper level, not the power of me, a deeper power is suddenly there when you don't repair, attempt to repair your form identity when the world always does things to it, tries to do things to it. Or even try to assert it to make it bigger.

A typical case is in a conversation or a discussion, somebody says something which you'd absolutely disagree with or you know you have to put him right and it becomes a I know better and there's enormous energy behind it and then perhaps in the course of the discussion it's becoming revealed that this person has certain facts that are showing that your long held belief is actually not true and then this would be very hard to recognize if you're unconsciously identified with that position and keeping your sense of self intact you would be seeking all kinds of arguments to cover up the truth of what this person is saying because you're not defending the truth anymore, you're defending your mental image, your form identity.

This is often the case when you observe when people discuss things, they're defending a me and they're attempting to assert a me needing to stand out and another interesting practice then in a discussion, when it's not vital that this person should know your opinion, nothing much depends on it and it's just just simply be quiet but not then going into thought and thinking how spiritual I am because I'm not this is the deeper meaning behind this strange parable of Jesus saying turn the other cheek which is all metaphorical is not it's the practice of not attempting to repair your form identity something just non-reaction and there's enormous strength in that if you truly needed to say something because a certain situations or course of action depended on it, you would say it but you're not defending a me, a sense of self what you say then is in the service of the truth, if it is the truth, but not a me that identifies with what it sees as the truth and then it feels a little bit as if you were becoming nobody you're kind of becoming almost invisible when you're not God and there's a strange it actually feels good but at first the little me gets uncomfortable with that and then once you know the depth that is there when is the end of all fear, this is an aspect of the depth I talked about yesterday within yourself so a good thing would be for example if all the world suddenly thought you were dreadful maybe they have some kind of belief about you that you did something that you didn't do or maybe you did do it not repairing not needing to repair that because there's a greater power deep within you than that than your form this is contained in the story I've told a few times about the Zen master who lived in a

town in Japan and was very highly respected and one day a young girl 17 year old gave birth, she wasn't married, she lived next door to the Zen master, she gave birth to a baby and the parents what happened who is the father, this is dreadful and she said well it's the Zen master next door, he did it 9 months ago when I was visiting him for spiritual counseling that's when it happened so they started screaming and shouting and rushing to the Zen master and saying she just told us what you did to her and they told everybody in the village and the whole village the town was in commotion and then the Zen master when the parents came sat there and listened she just told us that you are the father and you did it to her and he listened and all he said was is that so? and they said yes and here's the baby you have it, we don't want it, you look after it it's yours, this is your baby and he said oh is that so? and so he went away, he lost his reputation nobody came to see him anymore and for one year all his activities were looking after the baby feeding it a year later the girl became a little bit more mature and suddenly confessed to her parents that somebody else was the father, the boy who lived two streets away and not the Zen master so the parents became very disconcerted and rushed to the Zen master and said we're terribly sorry can you ever forgive us? she just told us that you're not the father and he listened and said is that so?

and said yes and we want the baby back now is that so? and he handed the baby back and suddenly his reputation was restored and this is a teaching story of, it's a little bit extreme just as Jesus' parable of turning the other cheek is a little bit extreme but it's a teaching story to show the state of non-resistance, inner non-resistance and the power that lies when you contact that state of, live in that state of inner non-resistance and you see the the good also that comes of any situation that looks bad on the surface just as in this teaching story it looks like a dreadful situation on the surface, big drama and so the good that comes out of any seemingly bad situation when you enter the state of non-resistance to that situation because any so-called bad situation is to do this, what is that so-called bad? that so-called bad is that some form is no longer surviving as that form whether it's a physical form in which case it is physical death or whether it is a psychological form of me or my belief systems that don't survive or my image of me that doesn't survive or other people's images of me who don't survive, it is always some form is being shaken and dissolving or dying this is what is called bad or the threat that some form may be the form is being attacked in one way or another and when that is not resisted from within then the form becomes loose, transparent or dissolves and whenever a form dissolves it really means death whenever there is death of any kind it could be a psychological death in the case of the Zen master it wasn't death anymore because he had died already psychologically so it was easy for him there was no longer a form there, there was just a form in other people's minds that was being projected a highly regarded Zen master and that collapsed if those projections had still been feeding his internal mental form that would have led to great suffering so it's always when the so called bad form is being threatened or destroyed or dissolving and there is no inner resistance to that and that goes death, the ultimate non-resistance to what looks evil

there we gain inner non-resistance externally certain actions may happen inner an inner state of non-resistance do not resist evil one of the most profound statements it's about an inner

[Speaker 2] (8:04:06 - 8:04:07)

state

[Speaker 1] (8:04:08 - 8:28:33)

it doesn't necessarily mean that if somebody comes at you with a weapon that you don't prevent him from hitting you but it's an inner state so here this is the secret is this non-resistance and then the transformation of any situation into a deeper good not the good that is between continuous fluctuations in the world of polarities between good and bad something is born as good, something dies as bad deeper, a deeper good that is even contained in the image of Jesus on the cross which is an act of evil one could say but at the same time there is a depth to it and it's an archetypal image a deep truth embedded in it whether you are a Christian or not to see that there is a deep truth embedded in that the archetypal image of it is evil on the surface and yet there is a deeper good there because of surrender because of non-resistance so to know the power that is in you whenever that is the case now any situation is transformed into good imagine the situation you dissolve all drama because all those situations are drama some dramas are violent and that true healing is dissolving the drama through not contributing to drama in any way and this is what the Zen master did he never became part of their drama the whole town was acting out drama and there he was nothing ever happened only good came of it and the good was that this baby for one year grew up in his presence was loved deeply the best start in life you can imagine and only good came of it, the girl became conscious nobody accused she probably came back to him later and nothing, no change see the good that comes in any situation in your life in which you enter the state of non-resistance it is always to do with now of course in the now the parents come running and say you did that this is the form the now takes at this moment the parents come in and say you are the most dreadful person on earth you did it is that so?

that's an extreme form he could also say no I didn't do it without an inner defence mechanism taking place I didn't do it that's how it is and again he is not defending or asserting his form identity, simply stating the fact that would be a slightly less extreme form of the same teaching but the most extreme is not even to defend yourself verbally, not to say nothing but that nothing is the inner really and also it's not always people situations come not to resist them as forms that say this situation is bad and this strengthens the me that complains, remember we talked about the complaining entity in the head the favourite device for the egoic entity is to complain about a situation that you find yourself in, instead of being in a relationship of non-resistance towards the situation which may on the surface justifiably be called bad and then see the good that

suddenly emerges and how quickly it actually changes when it's not internally resisted non-resistance internally does not always imply that there is no action externally but it is non-reactive action, simple action, not action that arises out of the reactive little me which is fearful action, violent action so this transformation into good of anything that looks bad through that any situation amazing, amazing and it could be that a situation happens and you know you probably only have 5 more minutes to live extreme case of bad and there is utter and complete yes and so there cannot be there cannot not be a deep serenity and peace suddenly filling your entire being and then death comes dancing towards you that's the flowering of consciousness and whether it flowers for the next 20, 30, 40 years in your life and gradually unfolds or whether it flowers for 5 minutes it doesn't really matter there is no it is beyond time that flowering arises out of the timeless dimension of pure consciousness anyway there is no time and even if in some of you the old mind structures obscure that flowering again as you move back into the world in a few it may happen when a crisis comes or death comes suddenly it will be there and you will remember sitting here but then it won't be a memory it will be an alive now the same aliveness suddenly is there and this also the collective situation in this country and in the world in general at this time non-resistance you look at it and see it and that's how it is don't create an enemy in your mind no situation is an enemy and no person is an enemy so there is a gentle what I sometimes describe as a spaciousness around this whole situation suddenly even the situation is not an enemy it is this collective situation it is and suddenly the situation itself is embedded in a spaciousness a gentleness and we may focus on that again this afternoon but you do it at any time, the collective situation in the world at this time don't make that situation you may have already relinquished the unconsciousness of making certain groups of people into enemies but you couldn't be making the situation into an enemy by feeling it is dreadful and it shouldn't be happening the fact is that it is it is there is non-resistance towards the situation you see the is-ness this is the situation at this time on the planet and it is as it is and then through allowing that is-ness and not judging it anymore a vastness reveals itself to you that is deeper than that particular formation collective formation which is temporary anyway one thing that is certain about any situation is this too will pass and that is healing that can be collective healing if a group of people even individual it's all one presence realizes this truth and holds that space of non-resistance even to the situation of course there are no enemies there is simply human unconsciousness and there is the conflict situation and there is the acceptance of that is-ness and suddenly the worst situation is surrounded by peace and then something happens even to the situation not because you want to change it I have to do something about it it is deeper than anybody's doing the one intelligence can then operate flow through the human form more fully and that does what is the only place where the only sanity there is is through the one intelligence so we are holding the space where we recognize the suchness of this collective situation and with that comes compassion with all involved all are involved in this violent drama and perhaps the violence won't be going on that much longer we don't know that now all that are involved in this violent human drama we

could call it the earth drama we are looking upon that situation with acceptance and this means that is also compassion at first there may be some sadness there because the sadness is still there because you see the forms that have already died in there then comes acceptance of the sadness because that also is the suchness of this moment that something in you feels sad about what happened yes so you accept the suchness of that then you accept the suchness of that situation the totality of it and then the sadness becomes compassion now compassion in compassion at the core of compassion that is not sadness compassion arises when you not even resist the sadness that you feel or mourning about death which is a form of pain and that is not resisted either inside yourself you cannot reach the state of compassion if you don't move through that if you don't accept that which arises which is sadness or pain about the situation yes and so you go deeper by accepting that is what you feel and that takes you to a deeper core and that core that lies, that is the core of compassion compassion is a core of deep peace and on the it's hard to talk about this on the periphery of that deep peace there may be a lingering sadness yes but deep down there is a peace and a serenity that many many people have reported they found spontaneously when they were facing death and many who actually died were never able to tell us that that's what they found that serenity and that peace and that from there all healing emanates that has enormous transformative power to hold that state to be, to live in that state, it's enormous power so that is don't underestimate the effect on the collective consciousness a group such as this can have and simply because collectively collectively we enter that state and hold it not with any effort allow it to be there's the situation the earth drama there's a sadness around it some pain and through allowing both the external and the internal the external is the madness of the drama and the violence the internal is the to some extent the reaction of the personal self to it yes that's there too and so it's allowed on both levels the external and the internal and only if you allow both levels to be then that you go deeper to the core and suddenly you reach through the surrender you reach the serenity, the peace that is the essence of your being and of all beings the one essence and knowing that in effect in turn has enormous effect even on the world of form it's only by knowing the formless that something that shines through you and then affects even the world of form so this is perhaps it's no coincidence there are no coincidences everything is connected to the totality the fact that our gathering here this week is taking place at this particular time and some of you perhaps even doubted before coming here whether you wanted to come here you may have doubted whether even to look for peace whether you even have a right in that situation to look for inner peace do I have the right to look for inner peace when so many people are suffering perhaps you ask yourself a question like that and of course it's not a question of having a right there is no other way for humanity to become transformed and so it's not here not just while we are sitting here as a group it's also when you go away you continue to go within and go past the two possible levels of resistance which is resistance to what is externally and resistance to what is internally which means you feel bad about feeling bad you feel sad and then that doesn't feel good but you get stuck on

that level of feeling sad and you have stories in your head about it and you give you never move beyond it because you feel sad but you don't want to be sad you shouldn't be feeling sad it's acceptance this is what I feel this is, that is so as we are doing it here you do it when you are alone when you go away from here wherever you go enter that state nothing can prevent you from finding that deep core of peace which transforms the world nothing can prevent you because there is nothing that you resist if there is nothing that you resist that means nothing can prevent you from finding it and if your inner state is turbulent you notice that your inner state is turbulent and say, there it is my inner state is turbulent there I feel the turbulence that's how it is there it is it is amazing what happens when you don't resist so nothing can stop you from non-resistance and all you might say you go and suddenly you wake up in the morning and remember all your problems and the dreadful problems of the world and you feel very unhappy and say this is reality and that retreat that wasn't reality the television is telling you what reality is and you get very sad and after two hours of unhappiness deep unhappiness you feel your unhappiness and then you remember your spiritual practice and you say well I couldn't possibly find peace look how unhappy I am there is no point in even trying to find peace in that unhappy state I am so unhappy ok you are unhappy that's what is I am unhappy at this moment I am so unhappy that's how it is unhappy so let me be unhappy it's ok to be unhappy this sounds very weird doesn't it because the very essence of unhappiness is that it's not ok something is not deeply not right and if you then say a seemingly mad statement I don't mind being unhappy doesn't seem to make sense but there is great power there because it's the end of resistance and the very cause of unhappiness was an enormous amount of resistance let me be unspiritual it's the letting be and suddenly there is something far greater depth than the little me that thinks of itself of this or that or even has the sadness suddenly the depth is there so isn't this is so amazing that nothing can stop you any condition that is non-resisted will take you there anything that's not resisted takes you there any condition any situation takes you to peace takes you to that you can find that out I'm speaking about this now with reference to large scale events you can find it out but on a small scale you're sitting quietly in your room enjoying the peace all around you and suddenly some huge noise starts up outside maybe it's one of those I don't know if they're called pneumatic drills here in England they're called pneumatic drills one of the worst noises there can be how can I be peaceful here I mean this just doesn't work and you can then try a little practice you listen to that noise and see there it is you accept the is-ness of that noise the mind no longer labels it when you accept the is-ness it is and you begin to listen to it and there's no longer a me that contracts and says no to it you begin to listen to it without a no complete non-resistance and you'll be very surprised what you feel suddenly and even the noise might be transformed and the pneumatic drill might be saying oooooom

[Speaker 2] (8:28:34 - 8:28:34)

ooooom

[Speaker 1] (8:28:58 - 8:51:12)

now whether you stay then in that room or not it's a secondary matter maybe you move to another room where it's more quiet or you may enjoy staying there and continue to listen to the oom the action that then takes place is secondary it will be right for that moment maybe you will remove yourself or maybe the moment the drill becomes oom maybe it stops so in some cases in little cases of acceptance you may be surprised sometimes in major cases it happens how quickly a situation changes once you've surrendered to it internally how quickly it changes and this is why some people say when they notice that this happens they say it almost looks as if life were giving a test a test whether you can surrender or not this is how it sometimes looks I don't necessarily want you to believe that you don't need to believe anything but it often looks as if life were giving you a little challenge just to see if you can surrender especially you'll get it when you claim that now you have arrived occasionally people come to me and I love it when they come or they call and come and say I am liberated now I'm totally liberated I know it, and it's wonderful I love that, I don't say you're not right, they may well be right but I often say just wait let it give it a few months before you start writing a book about it you can never plan for vital things we were going to have questions this morning but the present moment required something else so we may have questions this afternoon at the moment this is vital at this moment for us to realize that the power that we have not as we as individual little me's that the power that there is in consciousness and the power that this group has that each individual has not as an individual but as an opening into the power the one power so your power is the opening that you can be an opening into that and then it flows through you not as a me that claims anything that I am going to change the world no but the world can change through you so to speak it's not so much a doing as an opening and an allowing and even non-resistance is not really a doing one could say it's the opposite of doing resistance is doing non-resistance is allowing and so you have strange you have certain Indian philosophies and teachings that say there is no doer realize that nothing that you do is that you do it it just happens ultimately it's true but I don't approach it that way it looks often when I speak as if you could do something and that is both true and not true it must remain a paradox if we take one position we are not quite right if I say yes you can do it's not quite right if I say there is nothing you can do it's not quite right either you are one with the totality so anything that you do obviously is not separate from the totality it acts through you and even the belief that yes I can change the world if it's the right if you realize what that statement means yes there is truth in that if it's not misunderstood as if me as the little me could do it but if I what I perceive as I which is in the first instance is this form temporary, no, but that becomes a window sometimes in groups people like to arrive very early or when there are talks and they like to sit in the front and I sometimes wonder why do they like to sit in the front and they say because I can feel an emanation there that comes from you and and I first said well and I realized what they meant the emanation is because this form is a window and so the breeze comes through the

opening it doesn't come from the window of course so there is some truth in it it's nice if you want to sit near an open window where you can feel the breeze but of course the real reason why you are sitting there is so that you also become an open window and then the breeze also comes through you the very fact that you recognize what I metaphorically call breeze the very fact that you can sense it means that it's already in you otherwise you wouldn't even sense that that in you which senses the deep peace the emanation of peace that comes from another person, the emanation of love that comes from what looks like another person that in you that is sensitive to that feels that, responds to that is the same it is the same love and peace that you see coming from that form that which draws you temporarily perhaps to that form is the same in you it recognizes itself that's why it wants to be close to that form, there is still the danger that the mind misinterprets it and thinks there is something essential to this form, to this person but that is never true it's only because that person is transparent that this person, so called person can reflect something to you that is your essential reality the mind the mind can construct now another identity for that a form identity for that transparency and say and you could then worship a form identity not realizing why you are doing that it's precisely because there is a transparency to the form and feel so you could a so called guru I'm not a guru well, who knows but is both can be very helpful and can be a hindrance to finding yourself if understood rightly the function of a spiritual teacher if understood rightly can be a great help if understood wrongly can become a hindrance because it can prevent you from finding you because then you see it all out there in this great divine being what about you? and so those are people who are totally attached to the form of their teacher and he or she is the greatest and there is no other like him or her well that's nice, but what about you?

what is your reality? are you not is your essence divine? so it's use that wisely the spiritual teacher and when you listen to tapes of this teacher the temporary form of course all videos use all those things wisely whenever the truth is recognized as if it were coming from out there who recognizes it?

what is it in you that recognizes it? it's the truth who is it that senses and feels and recognizes the emanation of peace or love? it's the peace and love in you that sees itself perhaps more clearly as yet you can sense it in yourself but it's the response is there and so it's good sometimes to when you sense that you let go of the form of the teacher some people have a photo of this form at first I thought that was weird because why would they want to have a photo of a face and then some people said well when I look at it I suddenly feel peaceful and I become present again there's a presence when I look at it and then I looked at my photo and I said yes it can work perhaps laughter laughter as long as they realize they are not looking at this form, they are looking really at themselves the essence of what they are looking at is themselves how can a photo work it's a piece of paper I don't quite understand that but on the other hand a piece of paper of course is alive too it's molecules, it's an energy field so I don't know if it works but

then once you sense that and you see presence arises and the piece that comes with presence is there look away from the photo don't get attached to the form too much using the form as a reflector of your own reality which then can emerge more fully sitting here also it draws out presence in you that's the main reason that consciousness that we call presence that is not to do with the conditioning that lies on top of it is drawn out as you sit here it responds it recognizes itself and so that's the birth of presence one could say in many of you the birth has already happened and so it's simply an intensification of that and that is beautiful and so this form has a temporary function at some point it will pop like a soap bubble and it doesn't matter so using it wisely and whenever you see it in another you sense it where do you sense it? where is it?

here nobody is more divine closer to God than you nobody is closer to the one, to the source to God than you the only difference may be that you don't know how close you are you can also gaze into the eyes of a loved one a son a daughter a partner a parent you gaze into their eyes and there is a stillness while you look you look at each other not through mental concepts not even as this is my son or this is my partner or this is simply presence and you look and there is a love there and a peace any person that you love look into their eyes and where is the love? in you and what is that love?

if it is love if it is not the egoic clinging that is called love but the true love is knowing the other as yourself feeling that oneness not just at first it might be a deep connectedness but when you look more closely that connectedness is more than connectedness it is actually the oneness and knowing that sensing that is love so when you are with a partner it could be that you are beyond mental formations when you are with that partner there is just the love and then close your eyes and even if the form of the partner isn't there, the essence of that love is there, which is the same essence in that person so you everyone ultimately whoever you meet when you dwell in that state of connectedness which is more than connectedness oneness you are always meeting yourself and at first you may only realize that when you are with a spiritual teacher who emanates very clearly your own essence back to you, so to speak then it is very clear that you are meeting yourself and then you meet others, it may also be when you truly love another human being it is also easier to feel that you are meeting yourself the essence of oneness and then you meet many others where it is not so clear yet because there is all kinds of stuff that cover up the essence in that person and perhaps a reaction to that which covers up the essence in that person may bring back a little bit of covering up in yourself so you can't feel it but as it intensifies you can actually look through whatever covers up the divine reality of that human being you look through it you see it but it is not of interest to you whatever that person does whatever the conditioning mental, emotional conditioning little me entity is is not of much interest to you and you see it but you look through it and you can sense the essence of that person and love them no matter what they do or say or think they are because as you love them as yourself so you look through the veil of illusion an illusory identity and love each human

being because you recognize them as yourself and then you love your neighbor as yourself your neighbor is everyone you meet there are no conditions to that love I will only love you if you become more conscious and of course Jesus said if you love only those who do good to you anybody can do that I don't think that's the exact translation but and said love even those who seem to be doing wrong to you or plotting evil or whatever what he means is because you can't try to do that Christians haven't fully understood the depths of that statement so he said okay I have to love this dreadful person I'm going to try I'll see if I can love all my neighbors and it never quite worked and in fact it often had a counterproductive effect because in your mind you created an image of a good Christian that I am who loves his neighbors and then you were even able to unable to acknowledge in yourself the hatred that you felt towards your neighbor and covering it up and then it comes out through very unconscious things that you say or do and deny even that no I didn't do that and it can go so far as to inflicting violence on others so what does he really mean when he says even those who it means looking through the layer of illusion that pretends to be a person and not making as I pointed out yesterday not making human unconsciousness into an identity for that person then you get stuck the wall of unconsciousness and when you've constructed an identity for another person out of the movement of unconsciousness you get you get drawn back a little bit more into your own illusory form identity you have to free everyone from that it's always reciprocal you construct an illusory identity for one other person in this world and then you're trapped to some extent yourself so human interaction is a great practice, spiritual practice it's the very ground where it all happens spiritual practice so using the teacher wisely recognizing yourself no more the essence of who you are you could use a Buddha Buddha is a beautiful image

[Speaker 2] (8:51:13 - 8:51:15)

he sits there

[Speaker 1] (8:51:24 - 9:17:23)

and of course it's not really an image of a person, nobody knows what the Buddha looked like and there were hundreds of years after he died for hundreds of years there were no Buddha images they came much later but it's an inner state it's a pointer to an inner state and there you see the peace and where is the peace? here and if there's non-peace, what do you do?

there's the peaceful Buddha and here's the unhappy me let me be unhappy then okay unhappy unhappy and there we go transformation happens something you can do with reference to it's not really a doing but language is like that with reference to the collective events in the world at this time you hold the situation in your consciousness you contemplate it allow it to be feel what you feel about it, if you still feel it could be that when you hold that situation you may already no longer be generating sadness it's

possible that you can go directly from acceptance of the situation into peace or you may go indirectly from holding the situation not in total acceptance perhaps some sadness arises some pain arises then you accept that and then you go into peace and do that a few times during the day and also somebody told tonight the president will speak I don't know whether you are going to listen to it, I don't believe there's a TV set in this at Omega which usually is a good thing I would say if you listen to it or watch it somewhere on the radio then while you listen or watch or if you don't at that time perhaps particularly hold that spaciousness that doesn't say there's something dreadfully wrong in this world, no hold that spaciousness the suchness of this the isness of this that's all that's needed it's almost I'm doing this, it's almost as if here were the situation and the turbulence of it and here you are holding it in a gentle embrace it's a vast embrace because in a deeper sense whatever happens is there's nothing outside of you, whatever happens somehow is part of you there's ultimately nothing outside all unconsciousness that you see is all part of you there's nothing outside of you really, don't try to understand that mentally actually and so you can hold even a vast situation like that in a much greater vastness and there is gentleness and there is compassion this attitude of holding this gesture is I'm doing this to show you an inner state but to do it can also help to remind yourself of what it is like there's something perhaps feminine almost about it, it is so and you see it sometimes in statues of female representations of the divine it's often in that of Mary or often it's that gesture of gentle holding thank you thank you to Joe for the song and the Hopi elders for the message that you just heard part of that message I read it just now take nothing personally sadness, fear anger, even those things that seem to be mostly to do with who you are fear is human fear, anger is human anger sadness is human sadness not really personal and the mind is the human mind and its structures the way it works conditioned human mind and a mind based identity also conditioned nothing personal anywhere a new identity is emerging it's very different from the personalised sense of self some purists would say, well it's no identity at all, it's no self well it depends on how you want to use language I'd say a new identity is emerging who you are beyond the narrow personalised sense of me to some extent that still operates a little bit the framework of your life you remember things you still have a name probably but you're not seeking an identity accumulating stuff around your name which is an unconscious process starts as soon as you learn your name which you didn't even choose and then stuff accumulates around it a me, me, me the other thing I remember from just reading the message from the Hopi elders do everything in a sacred manner and that's exactly what we addressed this morning so that you cannot do something in a sacred manner if it's a means to an end if this moment is a means to an end and sacred action implies that you are completely present with that action and you give it your full attention you honour this now that's what I called this morning quality high quality really is that sacredness that comes into your life more and more it doesn't mean necessarily that you become extremely slow from now on although at times as this new thing comes into your life it may be that alone in your room you might be slowly practicing picking something up without making it into a means to an end this is it's pick

up a pen an object, the hand moves towards it you pick it up and even that movement is not a means to an end and you look at it and let it be so completely that labels are unnecessary in the mind there's simply presence, the field of presence in which it appears that's you and put it down so you performed an action in the field of awareness that's sacred so at first you may slow down here and there and gradually you can resume perhaps not your normal speed because normal speed is a bit mad but you can do things naturally a natural flow to doing and if the situation requires it it may well be that the flow is a fast flow and yet you're present in every movement even while you're running you're present with every movement not trying to reach a mental projection of me over there where I would like to be laughing running without the mental projection of me over there, just me here movement, energy moving beautiful and again it's a better quality running there was an interesting film some years ago in which somebody does a lot of running and I remember the way he looks when he's running as Forrest Gump as if he were standing still and his head goes like that not and that happens to be a film who is about a man a fictitious person who his state is very similar to the enlightened state except that he is pre-thought but his connectedness, his oneness is the same as the enlightened state he doesn't know it so things come to him easily, whatever he needs he does heroic things in the war in that film and yet claims no credit, nobody did it it just happened so that's a beautiful example of enlightened state, not really what we call the state of becoming free of thinking but not yet having gone through the thinking state and thereby live in that state of greater connectedness, but we can't go that way a similar film many years earlier, if you want to watch it and haven't seen it yet about also a fictitious person in a similar state it's called Being There so that's both these films show how things become helpful how life cooperates with you when you live in that way of non-resistance and not having a personalized me that needs, wants and claims and resists that obstructs the flow and so life becomes a sacred thing it always was but we didn't know it we may have a few questions if there are any, just a few words about questions in general there may be more questions than answers here no question matters that much because this is not about understanding ultimately what you need to understand is easy it's very little the rest isn't to do with working something out mentally and yet a few questions may arise I would encourage vital questions that concern yourself or maybe somebody close to you or your practicing of presence the arising of presence in you or the obstacles to the arising of presence in you or the pain body questions like that vital, immediate true and then there are other questions that are not so helpful but they may be interesting very interesting but not, they lack the vitality as an example would be please explain the difference between your concept of presence and the Buddhist concept of sunyata it's interesting but it's a thought based mind question and if we were here for many weeks maybe we could address that another question that is not vital, an example would be what are we Americans supposed to do in this situation what are we supposed to do now if President Bush came in here and asked that question it would be real and then perhaps if we are still enough an answer would come but if you ask that question it's a hypothetical question if you

were in command what would you do well I'm not that's why I don't know what to do somebody who doesn't like public speaking handed me a question earlier so I'll start with that one this is quite a few people may have a similar question most questions if they are vital will be helpful to almost everybody the answers, if there are any answers will be helpful to everyone can you talk about community Sangha, that's the Buddhist word for community would you suggest meeting in small groups to practice together and what would we do exactly and how can we avoid the various trappings of ego rituals and organizations thank you so much for your teachings

[Speaker 2] (9:17:23 - 9:17:25)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (9:17:27 - 9:29:41)

many people are asking about meeting in small groups and many people already meeting in small groups once a week or whatever in their local communities cities, towns and you may already have a group at home or you may be part of a group or you the possibility of having or joining a group may have already come up in your life it's helpful it certainly is helpful to sit with a group of people in a shared space of presence that it truly is helpful if you don't have a group that's fine other people around you will begin to ask questions begin to wake up as you are waking up others around you will begin to wake up and you may well find yourself having an informal group, you never wanted to set up a group and suddenly there are a few people around you who are also waking up and so you get together occasionally and it can arise naturally without any prior planning, that's possible too and the best things arise in that way or you may have a slightly more formal setting where you open your home and invite people who have read the book to come and sit together and there are various ways then of doing this it's not so much a doing but the least risky way of doing this is to invite people in sit together in stillness for a while perhaps at the very beginning listen to some inspiring music because everybody comes in with the agitated mind energy often after work or whenever they come so a little bit of music then silence, shared stillness then you could listen to a tape for half an hour or an hour or a video and then have another period of silence and go home then there's very little danger of mind interference or you could have a more active group in which people share of their own life, how presence has come into their lives or obstacles they are meeting and that requires one or two people of the group to be able to hold the space of presence to hold that spaciousness to be in that state of awareness otherwise it can become a mind dominated group setting and everybody begins to talk expressing their viewpoints and suddenly presence is gone so if there are one or two perhaps you yourself it makes a difference if there is one person who is not there as a person but as a spaciousness and just be there and sometimes words may come out of that spaciousness that looks like a person not to be careful that it doesn't become a social gathering there's nothing wrong with social gatherings but most social

gatherings are dominated by mind so it's a field of presence that people enter and yet avoiding all kind of self-consciousness about it some people like to have candles, others don't want any paraphernalia ritual was mentioned here some people like a little bit of ritual my only ritual is the bell there are candles some people will like it some people will be turned off by it somebody had a group somebody I know and quite a few people went and then one man who went there the first time said it was so spooky all these candles and keep ritual don't overdo ritual and get simple I don't want to create an organization as such because as the questioner mentions there's always egoic things that happen in organizations but some kind of place where people can find out who is running local groups I'm looking at that at the moment and so at some point there may be on my website local groups mentioned it may start soon and your group may be part of that we'll have to look without any organization as such just so that people can find out where there are groups but even if you have no formal group as you are awakening there will be people around you who are also awakening and so almost inevitably some kind of community does arise even if there's never anything formal if you're working one-on-one and perhaps you're already a counselor or do some other kind of work with people on a physical body work or whatever kind of work you may find that more and more presence comes in and takes over and you enter that state whenever you sit with someone or be with someone and for any counselors as you already probably know the main qualification to be a therapist an effective therapist is not I would disagree with Freud who said you need to have understood your own dreams yes that's helpful too but you need to be able to listen truly listen if anybody can truly listen would be already effective as a counselor and true listening means a state of complete non-conceptualization non-labeling judging complete openness in the same way that you look at a tree whatever is needed comes out of that state it may not even come through you within that spaciousness it may come through the other person that other person has a question, a problem and suddenly realizes what the answer is or suddenly realizes that the problem is meaningless and the question disappears or the answer comes through you suddenly you find yourself saying something and always becoming and many of you will be working if only informally working isn't the right word being with people becoming comfortable with not knowing the essence also of that kind of listening and of being with people is never feeling that I know or I should know but I don't know and people may sometimes come with problems that look beyond solution I don't know so not feeling that you need to know or that you do know you should know become comfortable with entering the space of not knowing then greater intelligence can operate through you and that's the alert presence you only know what is vital for you to know of that situation you won't know more than that and you won't know it beforehand and probably afterwards you forget what you said at the last retreat somebody asked me can you explain again what you said yesterday about this or that and I had forgotten and that person hadn't quite understood perhaps was a little bit hard of hearing and hadn't understood I had already said it but I couldn't remember what I had said but somebody in the audience remembered it and said it and then I repeated it and everybody laughed

because when these words came out of my mouth they were not fresh and new they were lacking aliveness I repeated the same words that I had said the previous day but because somebody reminded me what I had said they came out of my mouth again and they were so flat and lifeless that everybody laughed and that is the truth that you remember it lacks the power to transform it lacks transformative power when it comes from memory and if it arises out of presence it has transformative power and it might be very simple and yet there's a power to that you're also free if you want to say a few words about our gathering feel free if it's not a question that's fine too and if it's a question feel free to ask a young man came to me yesterday I don't know if he wants to ask his question here now it could be that all questions have already dissolved

[Speaker 2] (9:29:57 - 9:30:08)

it concerns the body I got along with you talking sharing how the conditioned mind